Spm

Vou [illegible]
N/C

202
250-8637

Fredericia

1 before
Confirm

NY PUBLIC LIBRARY THE BRANCH LIBRARIES
3 3333 05785 2192

DRAMA

839.82 Bjornson Gift 1
When the new wine blooms

Please return this book promptly and keep it in good condition for the next borrower *Remember* ——
YOU WILL BE THE NEXT BORROWER OF SOME OTHER BOOK!

	DRMX	191086	

THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY
CIRCULATION DEPARTMENT

THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY
AT
LINCOLN CENTER
111 Amsterdam Avenue
New York, N. Y. 10023

MY

Books circulate for four weeks (28 days) unless stamped otherwise.
No renewals are allowed.

A fine will be charged for each overdue book at the rate of 10 cents per calendar day for adult books and 5 cents per calendar day for children's books.

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2007 with funding from
Microsoft Corporation

http://www.archive.org/details/whennewwinebloom00bj

8 39.82-B
Gift I

Poet Lore

VOLUME XXII NEW YEAR, 1911 NUMBER 1

WHEN THE NEW WINE BLOOMS*

Translated from the Danish-Norwegian by Lee M. Hollander

By Björnstjerne Björnson

ACT I

To the right the facade of a two-storied house painted white. The facade of one exactly like it to the left.

In front of either house a low veranda. In the center of either house folding doors open on the veranda, from which a couple of steps lead to the ground. Large windows on both sides of the folding doors. Three large windows on the second floor.

View into a broad, well-cultivated landscape. Summer day, morning. In the distance, other estates.

In the foreground to left (of spectator) a bench with back. Chairs to the right. By the side of the bench a table. All of wood. On the table lie a parasol and a lady's hat. Also other things that indicate that the family lives out here during summer.

Scene I

(Dean Hall *enters from the right (of spectator). A handsome man, forty-five to fifty years, slender and vigorous, with strong, thick black hair. In summer dress. His face gives the impression of great intelligence. Nothing particularly priestly about him; rather looks like a sportsman.*)

Hall.— No one here? I believed I would meet the family at the breakfast table. (*Looks at his watch.*) What's that? Have I

*Copyright, 1911, by Lee M. Hollander
Copyright, 1911, by The Poet Lore Company. All Rights Reserved

PROPERTY OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK
THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY
58th STREET BRANCH

cycled that long? Here one is tempted from one lane into the other and doesn't calculate one's time. (*Notices the hat on the table.*) Is it Helen's? (*Looks up at both houses, whether any one is at the window. When he sees no one, he lifts the hat up very carefully and smells at it.*) It is Helen's! (*Looks at it.*) But I might have known that. How she suits to that shape and to those colors. (*A young girl's laughter is heard to the left. Followed by the laughter of several others.*) There they are upon me, all the girls. Why did I leave my wheel out there! (*Hurries out to right. Outside to the left is heard*):

Alberta.— There he is! Uncle! (*Comes running in*).— Uncle! Why uncle! (*Out after him.*)

Gunda (*in quickly*).— He doesn't stop! (*Out.*)

Josepha (*appears*).— Oh, Alberta will make him stop, all right!

Anna (*enters together with* HELEN, *who is without her hat*).— You ought to go after him, Helen!

Helen.— Indeed I won't!

Gunda (*without, to right*).— There he stops.

Josepha.— And raises his hat. At any rate he has good manners, let's hope.

Gunda (*returning to the others*).— Here she is coming with him.

Anna.— Yes, you ought to be the leader, Gunda.

Gunda.— I shall. He still believes he is talking to Nordland fishermen.

Josepha.— Now, don't exaggerate. We haven't any speaker as good as he is. Not in the city, either.

Gunda.— I don't mean his delivery. I mean what he wants us to believe.

Josepha.— Yes, isn't it just dreadful?

Anna.— For a man who dances!

Gunda.— And how he can dance! (*All laugh.*)

Josepha.— Come on, let's dance up to him! And in with him! In a long row!

All.— Yes!

Anna.— Then let us first shove this table aside! (*They do so.*) And the bench! (*They do so. Thereupon they dance toward the background in a long row and return, leading him captive. Then they form a circle around him, picking up* ALBERTA *into it, and dance forward with him. There they surround him by dancing a 'right and left' about him.*)

Hall.— Why, this is charming! I thank you ever so much. But what do you really want of me?

Alberta.— You are to be called to account.
Hall.— For what?
Gunda.— You know well enough.
Alberta.— For your sermon Sunday, uncle!
Hall.— Why, did you hear it?
Alberta.— No, but Gunda and Josepha did.
Gunda.— We heard it.
Hall (*to* GUNDA).— So it is you, young lady ——?
Gunda.— Yes, I. (*They have unlocked the circle.*)
Josepha.— Gunda is well up on the Bible, let me tell you.
Anna.— She has received the teacher's diploma for higher studies, Gunda has.
Hall.— I know it.
Josepha.— And I am somewhat in that line, too. Because I am a student.
Hall.— I know it. My compliments!
Alberta.— So then you spoke about marriage yesterday, uncle?
Hall.— I did. I took the liberty to.
Josepha.— Yes, and it isn't the first time?
Hall.— No. Not the last time, either.
Alberta.— And quoted Paul?
Gunda.— Epistle to the Ephesians.
Hall.— Oh, more than that!
Alberta.— About marriage?
Hall.— About marriage. The ladies are interested in that topic?
Alberta.— Immensely!
All.— Immensely!
Josepha.— There is nothing that interests us more.
Hall.—No, that's what I thought. It is therefore I chose that topic.
All (*excepting* HELEN).— On our account?
Hall.— On your account, ladies. And that's why I looked whether all of you were there. And you, Alberta, were not there.
Alberta.— No. I'm glad I wasn't. Because I heard that you spoke about submissiveness.
Hall.— That does not interest you?
Alberta.— No. What lady would that interest nowadays?
Gunda.— "Woman shall be subject to her husband."
All (*decisively*).— N — o — o!
Alberta.— We don't want to hear any such phrases. Such notions.

Josepha.— We are not living in the Orient.
Gunda.— Not in Paul's period.
Anna.— We are two thousand years ahead, let me tell you.
Hall.— Thank the Lord!
Alberta.— But why then always cite Paul?
All.— Yes, why?
Hall.— Because Paul is so human.
Alberta.— So you call that human?
Josepha.— That woman has no head?
Hall.— What's that?
Gunda.— It is written: "The husband shall be her head."
Alberta.— Do you agree with that?
The Others.— Do you agree with that?
Hall.— Paul means that ideally.
Josepha.— So *that* is ideal?
Anna.— That women have no heads?
Gunda.— That the husband shall be her head?
Alberta.— Do you agree with that?
The Others.— Do you agree with that?
Hall.— If you would graciously permit me to say a few words——
All (*laughing*).— Go ahead!
Hall.— Many thanks! Although I have my doubts ——
All.— Yes, indeed, you shall!
Hall.— Well, let's see! For I must repeat that Paul means an ideal marriage.
Josepha.— Where is such a one to be found?
Hall.— Even if it is not found, my ladies, it must be assumed. And that Paul does — with your permission?
All.— Oh — oh!
Hall.— Therefore, we resort to Paul, we who labor for the ideal marriage, that is, *for the marriage in God.*
Gunda.— In which man is the god?
Hall.— What's that?
Gunda.— Christ is the god of the church,— isn't that so?
Hall.— Of course.
Gunda.— Now it is written: The husband shall be the head of the wife, *even as Christ is the head of the church.* Why, then the husband becomes the god of his wife.
Josepha (*passionately*).— That is to say: The husband shall not only be the head of his wife; *he shall be her god?*
Several.— Ho — ho!

Hall.— Well, *isn't* he?

Alberta.— The husband? Her god?

Josepha.— Where?

All (*excepting* HELEN).— Yes, where?

Hall.— Here. And everywhere.

All.— The husband?

Hall.— Do not laugh, my ladies! For he is not only your god; no, if there were something greater than a god, your husband would be that — *in the days of your engagement! during your honeymoon!* Isn't that so?

All (*look at each other. Then they laugh.*)

Hall (*joining them*).— But it wasn't really thus Paul meant it.

Alberta (*more subdued*).— How, then, did Paul mean it?

Hall.— I explained it Sunday. But you weren't there.

Alberta.— Well, then explain it now!

Hall.— I said that it is an ideal marriage, when the husband does not and cannot desire anything but what is true and good. But then he is in God. Because God is the true and the good. That's what I said. And then it follows that the wife desires the same.

Alberta.— That is to say, she gives up her own individuality?

Gunda.— And just believes.

Josepha.— Does not think, but believes. Does not use her own head, but his.

Hall.— The most beautiful relation I know of, the greatest happiness in marriage a man can imagine is a wife who surrenders herself wholly to him, because she believes in him. And I am certain that also for her this is the greatest happiness on earth.

Alberta.— That is the slave ideal.

Hall.— When it is done of her own free will?

Gunda.— Free will in adoration? In blind adoration? Why, then they can't see!

Alberta.— We don't want to hear about adoration, and blind devotion in adoration. These old-fashioned, blind ways to please a god.

Josepha.— We want reciprocity. Open eyes and free will.

Hall.— No authority?

All (*except* HELEN).— There it is! On account of authority.

Alberta.— That she shall be submissive?

Hall.— In Paul's language it is called obedience.

All (*except* HELEN).— There it is; obedience! We shall be obedient.

Hall.— Now will you let me speak?

The Same.— Go ahead!

Hall.— I ought perhaps to yield to so much authority——

The Same.— Oh — oh!

Hall.— Paul demands obedience. The obedience of the father to God, the obedience of the daughter to her father.

Gunda, Josepha (*interrupting him*).— And to her husband.

All.— We know all that by heart!

Gunda.— First her father's slave, then her husband's.

Alberta.— Do you really agree with this sort of thing, uncle?

Hall.— In the ideal relation it isn't a question of authority and obedience. Agreement comes of itself. But there are other marriages — and also about them Paul has something to say.

Gunda.— About that the father may marry off his daughter — if he wants to.

Josepha.— And let be, if he doesn't.

Anna.— Her father is to choose! Her father is to decide about it!

Alberta.— No, look here, uncle, we choose ourselves.

All (*also* Helen).— We choose ourselves!

Hall.— But not without his consent?

All.— Yes, indee-ed!

Hall.— It is possible that this is modern; Christian it is not.

Alberta.— And how about our own individuality, our independence?

Josepha.— Shall no regard be taken to that?

Hall.— Yes, indeed. That's just what Paul does.

Alberta.— Where does he do that?

Hall.— In First Corinthians.

Gunda (*eagerly*).— In what words?

Hall.— Look it up yourself!

Gunda (*to the others*).— He doesn't want to speak out about it! (*To* Hall.) In what words?

Alberta (*curiously*).—You tell us! (Helen *exit by herself to the left.*)

Gunda.— Paul advises the father to yield, if the daughter's need so require.

Alberta (*astonished*).— To marry? (*At first silence, then general laughter.*)

Hall.— He is so human, Paul is. Have respect for that!

Josepha.— Oh, now! Paul is not in favor of marriage.

Gunda.— Paul is a bachelor.

Josepha.— He says distinctly, it were better that she marry not.

Hall (*seeks to escape from them, but they follow him*).

Gunda.— He says more still. It is only because of our sins that we are allowed to marry.

Josepha (*very loudly*). — When we can't restrain ourselves any longer!

Hall (*seeks to escape from them; but says*): Paul believed that the world would perish. That gives one a different point of view.

Gunda (*without heeding him*).— It is our sins, then, that sustain the world?

Alberta.— It is our sins that continue life!

Josepha.— Why, then, we ought to exclaim, long live sin!

All.— Long live sin! Hurrah!

Helen (*comes rushing in*).— The steamer is coming!

All.— The steamer! The steamer!

Alberta (*placing herself squarely before* HALL).— In that case we must break off our most pleasant conversation, uncle. Our regards to Paul from us! (*Courtesies.*) Good by! (*Exit.*)

Josepha (*coming forward*).— My regards to Paul and tell him that obedience is declining. (*Courtesies.*) Good by! (*Exit.*)

Gunda.— My regards and tell him that the world is advancing, all the same. (*Courtesies.*) Good by! (*Exit.*)

Anna.— Because of our sins. (*Courtesies.*) Good by!

SCENE II

HELEN, HALL

Hall.— Well? Aren't you going, also?

Helen.— Yes indeed. But I was going to fetch my hat. (*Comes forward to take it.*)

Hall.— Do you expect anybody by the steamer?

Helen.— Yes, mother.

Hall.— She has been to town already?

Helen.— Mother was up at five o'clock.

Hall.— And you girls have bathed already?

Helen.— We were just coming from our bath. (*Walks toward left.*)

Hall.— Well, you certainly came out of the water full of fight!

Helen (*stops short*).— Not I, uncle.

Hall.— Did you agree with me?

Helen (*shakes her head*).

Hall.— How? Not you, either? You whom I confirmed?

Helen.— No, in this matter you did not confirm me, uncle!

Hall.— In what 'matter'?

Helen.— In choosing a husband.

Hall.— You mean to choose yourself?

Helen.— I do.

Hall.— But, then, you will certainly ask for your father's consent, child?

Helen.— If I can get it.

Hall.— If you can get it? Yes, in that case you do not agree with me. I had believed you did.

Helen.— Not in this matter. And never will, uncle.

Hall.— But otherwise you do?

Helen.— You said something else that was so beautiful. I have never heard anything more beautiful. You said it also this Sunday.

Hall.— And that was?

Helen.— Oh, you know well enough.

Hall.— No.

Helen.— It was about the ideal marriage.

Hall.— Why, but that's the pith of the whole matter!

Helen.— Yes, as you explain it ——

Hall.— Why, but it's Paul!

Helen.— I don't like Paul.

Hall (*closer toward her*).— But what has Paul done to you, Helen?

Helen (*does not answer*).

Hall.—You agree with the others? In what they said about Paul?

Helen.— In that also.

Hall.— So there's more yet? Anything particular? That the others did not mention?

Helen (*is silent*).

Hall.— Oh, do tell me! Perhaps I shall learn by it.

Helen.— You ought not to make fun of me.

Hall.— I have not the slightest notion to. Not the slightest. I mean what I say. Do you remember when we talked together on our trips up in Nordland? In your confirmation days?

Helen.— How can you ask?

Hall.— Then you and Alvilde used to chatter away. And I learned of you. That time you did not have any antipathy to Paul, Helen.

Helen.— I didn't give it any thought.

Hall.— But now? Afterwards?

Helen (*suddenly*).— Do you understand what Paul means when he speaks about the bishop?

Hall (*greatly astonished*).— About the bishop?

Helen.— That, if a bishop becomes a widower he cannot marry again.

Hall.— He doesn't express it just that way; but it certainly is what Paul meant.

Helen.— Meant! Is there any meaning in it? What is the use of it?

Hall.— It was out of respect for marriage, I suppose.

Helen.— Why, then you can't marry again, either!

Hall.— But, dear Helen, I am no bishop.

Helen.— Oh, you know well enough that you will become a bishop. You have written so much, and have already got many votes.

Hall (*amused*).— Do you want me to become a bishop?

Helen.— Yes, certainly.

Hall.— Well, if I get your vote, too, I shall certainly become one.

Helen.— I want you to talk seriously with me, uncle.

Hall (*continuing in the same playful tone*).— There is, perhaps, greater seriousness in this than you imagine.

Helen.— But then you can't marry again?

Hall.— Why, I may marry before becoming a bishop.

Helen.— But then you can't become a bishop?

Hall.— Oh, that will not be taken so literally, I suppose. But if it were necessary to make a choice —— (*Stops short.*)

Helen.— Yes, what then?

Hall.— I would choose to marry.

Helen.— And give up becoming a bishop?

Hall (*nods*).

Helen (*stands there looking at him*).

Hall (*toward her*).

Helen (*runs out to left as fast as she can*).

Scene III

Hall, Arvik

Hall.— Well, I ——!

Arvik.— You here? I don't intrude?

Hall (*recovering himself*).— No, indeed!

Arvik.— What was the matter with Helen?

Hall.—With Helen? Helen—The other girls ran down to meet the steamer; but Helen had forgot her hat.

Arvik.— Oh, I see. (*Roguishly.*) Have you been comparing notes with the girls? I heard they wanted to speak with you.

Hall.— Yes, I have.

Arvik.— They say you preach so much about love these latter days, brother in law?

Hall (*now and during the following a little absent minded*).— About marriage, you mean.

Arvik.— What's that — about marriage? Well, that's a different thing.

Hall.— It *may* be something different.

Arvik.— And, being a husband, something different from being married.

Hall.— You mean that one can be married without being a husband?

Arvik.— It's so easy to talk with you, Hall. You comprehend one right away.

Hall.— But how did you come to think of this?

Arvik.— Not without good reason! By the by, I have a letter in my pocket from my son-in-law. Although they have been married only five months, the barometer stands at storm.

Hall.— With them down there?

Arvik.— Exactly. My opinion was and is that Marna ought not to be there. She is not fit for marriage.

Hall.— Why, then, did she enter it?

Arvik.— Because she wanted to, by all means. She had been near doing it several times before.

Hall.— But all the same — you are her father?

Arvik.— She has a mother, too. And the mother always agrees with the children. And the children side with their mother.

Hall.— Of course.

Arvik.— 'Of course.' That's what I say, too. But she doesn't stop there. She can't do anything by halves. She thinks, feels as the children feel and think. She lives altogether with them.

Hall.— And her business affairs.

Arvik.— And her affairs. She never neglects them. She is a genius.

Hall.— It is these affairs that have made her independent.

Arvik.— Of course. I understand so much, you know. She goes to the city every morning. When they are alone they stay there. They do a great many things they believe I don't know anything about.

Hall.— And you say nothing?

Arvik.— That would lead to a scene, and that I dislike. Besides, it's more amusing this way. But since my daughters are grown up and all this love making started in, there is no more peace in the house. The whole house rocks. All doors stand open. I don't know any longer who goes in or out. And all these girl friends! And all these love affairs and squabbles! And all that gossiping! And then the half engagements and full engagements and fallings out — I get completely mixed up. But she? Why, she swims in it as the fish in the sea. She is in love with every one the others are in love with. When it is all over, she has done with them too. The two older girls especially were given to it. To change admirers, I mean. Especially Alberta. The mother always following suit!

Hall.— Not always.

Arvik.— Not always? Oh, you are thinking of that affair with Karl Tonning?

Hall.— Yes.

Arvik.— You are right. That's something new. But then, Karl Tonning was her captain when she made a fortune in the Russo-Japanese war. She is fond of him.

Hall.— He is said to be quite an uncommon sort of man.

Arvik.— Uncommon. His talents also. But his temperament is, unfortunately, just as uncommon. He shoots at his servants!

Hall.— For shame!

Arvik.— He shot down two Malays. And now it seems that Alberta does not propose to be shot. (*Mysteriously and archly.*) So much, at any rate, I have accomplished!

Hall.— So I hear.

Arvik.— The affair began so ardently. But now!

Hall.— And that amuses you?

Arvik.— Why certainly it amuses me. Why, it feels as if I had a say in things, too. Otherwise I am shut out, an outsider. Like a charity member on my own estate. If I didn't have that — because farming interests me ——

Hall.— I have observed that.

Arvik.— Oh, very much! If I didn't have that I would take a long journey. I have often thought of it. It is especially Australia I long to see.

Hall.— Australia? You — who never travel?

Arvik.— It must be the most interesting spot on earth.

Hall.— After your home, brother in law.

Arvik.— So you believe I have a home? But no more about that! I have been observing you these days. You feel happy here?

Hall (*all at once with lively interest*).— Yes, you may be sure.

Arvik.— And now, when I heard that you had begun preaching about love ——

Hall.— About marriage ——

Arvik.— About marriage,— all the better! I thought of all these girls here. It must be a delightful thing for a dean from Nordland to drop down among so many cheerful creatures.

Hall.— It is delightful beyond words. You said a moment ago that it was so easy to talk with me, because I comprehended right away. Well, that's exactly what I feel at having come down among you again. Here all goes so immensely much easier. My thoughts are guessed before they are worded.

Arvik.— And that inspires the speaker?

Hall.— Inspire? I should say. To think of all the thoughts these girls have upset and disturbed in me. And how much have they not given me! One must have lived out of the world as long as I have done in order to understand that.

Arvik.— I understand it. (*Slyly.*) For neither can I help myself among them.

Hall.— Help yourself?

Arvik.— I mean, one catches it.

Hall.— 'Catch it' is not the word.

Arvik.— No, no.

Hall.— It is exactly as if they were effecting a great removal inside of one.

Arvik.— Yes, that expresses it better, perhaps.

Hall.— For example, think how heavy we are. Among them, gravity is annihilated. Because they ——

Arvik.— Ah!

Hall.— They use the earth merely as a spring board. The air is their proper element. The ether. A young girl's dance ——

Arvik.— Her dance, indeed!

Hall.— Isn't it the loveliest of all lovely things we possess in art? At any rate, that's what I maintain. Don't you agree with me?

Arvik.— Yes, indeed!

Hall.— It is the most beautiful manifestation of vital energy

that the earth can show. Or name me one more beautiful!

Arvik.— No, that's right.

Hall.— And above all, they don't know it themselves. They have done nothing toward it. Just like the flowers and the birds.

Arvik.— Oh, they are great rogues. They know it well enough.

Hall.— They know it — and don't know it. Now, they are quite unconscious of it, now again they play the rogue. This eternal change is irresistible.

Arvik.— Ho, ho!

Hall.— Yes, that doesn't of course impress you as much. But I who have come from out of the North, from solitude, and from my books, from that cold and wintry darkness, up there —— I can see the rich culture it betrays.

Arvik.— Culture?

Hall.— Precisely! Everything flashes with culture! Their eyes, their features, their movements, their walk, their speech. Yes, you, of course, don't see that. But I, for whom all is new, I see it. The more culture, the stronger, the faster it flashes.

Arvik.— Flashes, to be sure.

Hall.— And then these figures! These untouched, rounded ——

Arvik.— Hear the dean!

Hall.— Dean or no, I am a man. I dance, I like sport. All my senses are fully intact. It is therefore I can feel all this new life as signs of Spring.

Arvik.— The devil! Pardon — you were going to say?

Hall.— I was going to say that the untouched, the rounded in their figures, *that it is present also in their thoughts.*

Arvik.— In their thoughts?

Hall.— Yes, also in their thoughts! No long lines, never a continuation. Round about in circles they move, from one circle into the other. Now around this, now around something totally different. The one this way, the other that. Nothing continuous. Not as to time, either. Only moments.

Arvik.— Yes, flighty they are!

Hall.— Beware of that flightiness! If once you get into one of these circles — heavens be merciful unto us! We are not heavy, then, we neither; we fly along with them, before we know of it.

Arvik.— But it is most fun to fly along!

Hall.— A relief, a liberation! All burdens overboard, all values nothing, we are light and free — for a time, for a moment! But what

times, what moments! Long afterwards we are warm and young with it in our work.

Arvik.— They keep us company!

Hall.— They keep us company. That's it, exactly. They keep us company. It is as if their smiles lighted on all we think.

Arvik.— Hall?

Hall.— Yes.

Arvik.— I can't help it; but I always have the desire to touch them.

Hall.— No, no! Not that! No, no! I keep myself in hand. Out of reverence. Let me say, out of reverence for Spring's masterpiece. Out of a feeling of shyness, to speak plainly.

Arvik.— Why, but you dance with them? And round dances at that?

Hall.— Yes, there you are! For, to be sure, I like to.

Arvik.— Of course.

Hall.— This soft, pulsing life under my touch,— isn't it like being close to the very mystery of nature, to the vital function? Have you ever held a living bird in your hand? Is it not a sacred feeling? Have you felt how frightened the little creature is? Don't you become frightened yourself?

Arvik.— No. When I take hold of a hen to feel whether she's got eggs ——

Hall (*gives him a light box on his ear and turns away*).

Arvik (*good naturedly*).— Well, I call that a queer vital function.

Hall.— You desecrate the holy! (*Puts his hands to his head.*) What have I done? What did I let myself be carried away by? I beg your pardon! Dear Arvik, forgive me! (*Sits down, covering his face.*)

Arvik.— There, there — Hall; why we know each other. But now you can see for yourself that I understand that there is some new factor in the case. (*Bends down toward him.*) Dear me, but isn't the Dean in love!

Hall (*jumps up*).

Arvik.— With one of the girls?

Hall.— Do you think that ridiculous, Arvik? Do you? At my age?

Arvik.— At your age? I am as young as that myself.

Hall.— You too, then?

Arvik.— When the new wine blooms!

Hall.— The old wine ferments. (*Repeats the sentence.*) Why,

but you, too, — with one of those here?

Arvik (*nods assent*).

Hall (*suddenly*).— Why, but you are married?

Arvik.— Do you think *I* am married?

Hall (*after a pause*).— No — no! There's something in that. But, all the same ——

Arvik.— I tell you, it is a long time since I have been married. Just as it is a long time since I was father. I wasn't since the children were grown.

Hall.— But, Arvik!

Arvik.— Yes, what is it?

Hall (*changing his tone*).— Oh, I don't take seriously what you say. (*Changing again.*) But with me it is a serious matter.

Arvik (*rubbing his cheek*).— I have noticed it ——

Hall.— People generally say, when something affects one as deeply as this has affected me, "He is beside himself." No, I am myself to the highest degree.

Arvik.— To the highest degree! (*Familiarly.*) Is it one of the girls here?

Hall (*looks at him and nods assent*).

Arvik (*as above*).— And what does *she* say to it?

Hall (*also familiarly*).— That I don't know. Although I believe I do know.

Arvik.— You haven't spoken about it?

Hall.— Not directly. I must first speak with her father.

Arvik (*aside*).— Aha,— Paul! (*To him.*) You haven't done that yet?

Hall.— No. (*Laughs.*)

Arvik.— You are laughing? Is he perhaps an odd fellow?

Hall (*laughs more*).— That he is.

Arvik.— But how about your daughter? Oughtn't you to speak with her also? This concerns your daughter very much.

Hall (*eagerly*).— That you could help me in!

Arvik.— I? With the greatest pleasure.

Hall.— You promised her once to pay her way to London and our friends from Nordland there. They have so often invited her to come.

Arvik.— You mean that she should go now?

Hall.— At once. In that case she would not be here during the first time.

Arvik.— You mean to marry right away?

Hall.— Yes, indeed.

Arvik.— Happy man! But who is she, then?

Hall.— You have not guessed that yet?

Arvik.— No. How should I?

Hall.— The youngest one of them all. You find that strange?

Arvik.— Not in the least! I myself, I told you——

Hall.— Oh, you!

Arvik.— But I assure you!

Hall.— One can never tell whether you are joking.

Arvik.— As you please! The youngest one, you said? Who is the youngest one? Because there is such a crowd of them here.

Hall.— I am speaking to her father. (*Hasty, eagerly.*) Hush!

Scene IV

Alvilde (*from the right*).— You here, father?

Hall.— Good morning to you, my girl!

Alvilde.— Good morning, dear. (*She kisses him.*) Good morning, uncle!

Arvik.— Good morning. Good morning. (*Walks up and down by himself, laughing.*)

Alvilde.— You started out very early, didn't you?

Hall.— Yes, on a sick visit. By the way, your uncle has a piece of good news for you.

Alvilde.— Is that so?

Hall.— Something he has promised you?

Alvilde.— Oh, that trip to England? Yes, he is good enough at promising.

Hall.— No, indeed! You can get the money right away. You can leave to-night, if you want to. Just you speak with him! (*Walks out quickly to the right.*)

Alvilde.— Is that true?

Arvik.— It is. (*Smiling all the while.*)

Alvilde.— May I have it right away? Because there are two steamers. One this evening and one to-morrow morning.

Arvik.— You seem to have studied the time table!

Alvilde.— I am always doing that. Because I'd like to get away. What is it you are laughing about?

Arvik.— Maybe about the same.

Alvilde.— The same — as what?

Arvik.— As what makes you want to get away.

Alvilde (*with a prolonged*).— O — o — o — h! Have you caught on at last?

Arvik.— And you long ago?

Alvilde.— Yes, long ago. I am not *so* dense!

Arvik.— Have you told any one?

Alvilde.— Whom should I? Helen? Never a word.

Arvik.— And Helen?

Alvilde.— Do you imagine!

Arvik.— Well, and what do *you* say about it?

Alvilde (*does not make answer, but her features show what she feels*).

Arvik.— Do you think it advisable?

Alvilde (*without looking up*).— Advisable?

Arvik.— That an old man ——

Alvilde (*quickly*).— Father isn't old. Not in any way!

Arvik.— I beg your pardon! An elderly man ——

Alvilde.— Father is no elderly man.

Arvik.— No, no, of course not. He is young still, your father is. In fact, very young, yet. Almost as young as I. In his senses. In his feelings.

Alvilde.— What do you mean by that?

Arvik.— Gently, gently! I mean to say he still has a great appreciation of the rounded.

Alvilde.— Of the ——

Arvik.— Of the youthfully rounded. Of the rounded that does not know it. I should say, for the rounded and untouched. Also for that which turns around. Notions and suchlike things that only turn about themselves, ideas that have no connections. Round, round like moments.

Alvilde.— What in all the world ——

Arvik.— He just worships things that don't touch the ground, but only use their legs to fly with and the earth as a springboard. Live in the air, in the ether. And yet are so robust . . . no, so warm to the touch, so frightened in our hands, as if we were at the very fountain-head of life. But we mustn't touch it, no indeed. Though we should like to ever so much. That won't do, except in round dances. In round dances; but then it's like holding some frightened live bird in one's hand and feeling its heart beat. But it mustn't be a hen; because that would desecrate the holy.

Alvilde.— Have you gone crazy, uncle?

Arvik.— No, my girl. But in my long solitude and among my many books I have accustomed myself to analyze my feelings.

Alvilde.— With you one never knows whether you are joking or in earnest. Oh, — oh, it is father you are poking fun at! It's him you are making a caricature of! But I'm going to pay you back in good coin, so sure as I live! I'll tell you frankly, uncle! You had better be careful now!

Arvik.— Of all the little girls here you are the nicest one. That is my solemn answer.

Alvilde.— If you don't stop ——

Arvik.— If he makes love to my daughter, why shouldn't I make love to his?

Alvilde.— He is making love only to *one*. But you are making love to all of us, you are. That is to say, when you are in the humor. That's the difference between you two.

Arvik.— But, really, there is no one I like so much as you, Alvilde. It is only to conceal this that I am making love to the others.

Alvilde.— Oh, how nice of you to say that! But I can tell you something you don't see at all.

Arvik.— What's that?

Alvilde.— That we like you, all of us.

Arvik.— Is it possible?

Alvilde.— Yes, because there is something like a movement among us younger girls these days. We prefer older men. We like them best. We associate with them. Haven't you observed that, uncle?

Arvik.— No.

Alvilde.— How is that? Because just to-day the third marriage takes place between a young girl and an elderly bachelor.

Arvik.— That's so, indeed!

Alvilde.— And two of your own neighbors, two widowers ——

Arvik (*interrupts her*).— Right you are!

Alvilde.— The one is engaged to Inga, she is just twenty, and the other ——

Arvik.— Is about to become engaged ——

Alvilde.— To a real young girl of eighteen, Gusta Storm.

Arvik.— Why, it's only yesterday that I met him here on the grounds, and I ——

Alvilde (*interrupting him*).— There you see!

Arvik.— But tell me, Alvilde, what's the reason for it? Is it the support?

Alvilde.— Oh, yes, that too. We have become so practical,

nowadays, we young girls. But there are other reasons also.

Arvik.— For instance!

Alvilde.— We young girls, we don't only want to love and to be loved. By the time we are nineteen or twenty we are tired of that. We want to be useful.

Arvik.— So you want to be useful?

Alvilde.— And be appreciated for it. And be respected for it. And you older people are very appreciative.

Arvik.— That we are.

Alvilde.— Haven't you noticed how happy that makes us?

Arvik.— Yes, indeed.

Alvilde.— And then another matter. We enjoy making ourselves younger than we are. Making ourselves children. To be petted and fondled like children. Yes indeed, we like that. And the reason for it is that it flatters you. For you enjoy so much being superior. Feeling yourselves as our protectors.

Arvik.— Rogue!

Alvilde.— And then we like to get what we want without any noise. As if it was just natural to. And that we can do best with you.

Arvik.— Do you talk about such things among yourselves?

Alvilde.— All the time. That's the fashion, one might say. We talk about how we can rely upon you elderly people. And that you don't boss us and don't put on such airs. We talk about how kind you are.

Arvik.— Because *we* are appreciative. That's true enough.

Alvilde.— You need us more. You notice what we do for you. So you are more for us, are more together with us. We have a better time of it with you.

Arvik (*aside*).— Oh, she is dangerous, this girl! And now you want to leave us, Alvilde?

Alvilde.— I *must* get away. You must try to put up with it, uncle.

Arvik.— Oh, how I shall miss you!

Alvilde.— Will you, uncle?

Arvik.— Awfully!

Alvilde.— Why, then go along!

Arvik.— What's that?

Alvilde.— Go along, I say.

Arvik.— To London?

Alvilde.— Without anybody knowing about it? Wouldn't that be fun?

Arvik.— Ha, ha, ha!

Alvilde.— Would you like to?

Arvik.— Ha, ha, ha! She is dangerous, this girl!

Alvilde.— If so, I shall wait till to-morrow. Else I would have left to-night. It is also a larger ship, the one that starts to-morrow.

Arvik.— Without anybody knowing about it, do you mean?

Alvilde.— Yes. They do many a thing, too, you don't know anything about.

Arvik.— O, ho — ho! You're a rogue! A great, great rogue!

Alvilde.— Well? What do you think about it?

Arvik.— It's so jolly to hear your Nordland accent. It is so billowy.

Alvilde.— It suits the ocean.

Arvik.— Yes. You don't become seasick?

Alvilde.— A girl from Nordland? What a question!

Arvik.— I have long thought of making an ocean voyage.

Alvilde.— Well, then?

Arvik.— But it was a longer voyage. A much longer one.

Alvilde.— Where to?

Arvik.— To Australia.

Alvilde.— Dear me! Straight to Australia?

Arvik.— Will you go along there? With me?

Alvilde.— To —— We two?

Arvik.— Yes!

Alvilde.— Ha, ha, ha!

Arvik.— No, I mean it.

Alvilde.— Really?

Arvik.— I am sure you don't know what a fine journey it is, and what a magnificent country! Especially New Zealand. There lies the future, Alvilde! Oh, there lies the future.

Alvilde.— For the human race, you mean? Or for us two?

Arvik.— Ha, ha, ha! Rather, for us two! Do you want to?

Alvilde.— Isn't that going a bit fast, uncle? Can't we defer speaking about it till we are on the steamer?

Arvik.— You are right. Why, do you know, Alvilde, I believe I shall go along!

Alvilde.— Do you really?

Arvik.— Yes, indeed!

Alvilde.— Is that sure?

Arvik.— That depends on whether ——

Alberta (*at that moment crosses the stage from left to right, walking very fast*).

Alvilde.— Good morning, Alberta!

Alberta.— Good morning! (*Exit.*)

Alvilde.— What is the matter with her?

Arvik.— She has a hard time of it these days, Alberta has.

Alvilde.— Yes, just let me get away from all this business! Oh yes, yes, and how about the money, uncle!

Arvik.— I am going to give it to you on the steamer!

Alvilde (*looks at him*).— No, thank you! Let me have it now!

Arvik.— Right away?

Alvilde.— Right away!

Arvik.— I am going to bring it over to you.

Alvilde.— No, I'm afraid you will have to trouble yourself right away.

Arvik.— As it happens, I have a large bank note with me.

Alvilde.— Out with it!

Arvik (*fetches out his pocket book*).— A five hundred note.

Alvilde.— That is a good deal. But *you* are wealthy; you can spare it.

Arvik.— We never have any money we can spare, Alvilde. That is to say, if we know how to use it.

Alvilde (*teasingly*).— Do you mean you can't spare so much?

Arvik (*with a sigh*).— I shall have to try! Help yourself!

Alvilde (*taking it*).— How kind of you, uncle! Really unexpectedly kind!

Arvik.— Is it? And what am I to get in return?

Alvilde (*extending her hand*).— Thanks, uncle! Many, many thanks!

Arvik (*does not let go of her hand*).— Is that all? (*Drawing her to himself.*)

Alvilde (*low*).— Remember, Alberta is back home.

Arvik.— What difference does that make? An old man ——

Alvilde.— On the steamer, uncle! On the steamer! (*Loosening herself from his embrace.*) (*Low and ingratiatingly.*) For you are going along, aren't you? Good by! (*Runs out to the left.*)

Arvik.— Wait! (*After her.*) I'm going with you! (*Runs.*)

Scene V

Mrs. Arvik (*her voice is heard immediately afterwards, behind the scene to left.*)— Good by, girls! Thank you for keeping us company!

Several Girls (*behind the scene*).— Good by!

Mrs. Arvik (*appears after a little while from the left with a basket, a shawl, and a portfolio*).— Mary!

Mary (*appears from the left*).

Mrs. Arvik.— Here it is! Call me when you are so far that I may help you. (*Gives her the basket.*)— Lay this on my writing desk! (*Gives her the portfolio.*) Take this also! (*Gives her the shawl.*)

Mary (*re-enters house to the left*).

Mrs. Arvik (*walks up and down, looks up at the right hand wing. Then calls out*) Alberta! Alberta! Are you here? (*A window is opened above to the right.*)

Alberta (*in the window*).— Here I am!

Mrs. Arvik.— Oh, come down here! (*The window is closed.*)

Mrs. Arvik (*walks up and down*).

Alberta (*appears*).

Mrs. Arvik.— A nice way you are behaving yourself!

Alberta.— Behaving myself?

Mrs. Arvik.— Don't play the innocent. *That* becomes you least of all! I took him along with me from the city. Because he can't stand this uncertainty. He neither sleeps nor eats. Aunt actually was becoming afraid of him. I talked with him as well as I could, promised him all my help, and asked him to come along. But scarcely do you see us together on the steamer but you begin laughing and fooling with that young fop in white clothes,— I don't even know who he is.

Alberta.— Fooling? I never did that.

Mrs. Arvik.— Well, call it what you please. You have a quarrelsome disposition. You did it only to tease Karl. Did you see his face?

Alberta.— I did.

Mrs. Arvik.— Have a care, Alberta!

Alberta.— That's just what I *don't* want to.

Mrs. Arvik.— Only because father told us about the Malay sailors Karl had shot down.

Alberta.— That may be. If I can't speak a word to another man, and hardly to a woman, without seeing two eyes aimed at me like two revolver barrels, it is slavery! And nothing else. I'm not his property. And don't care to become it, either.

Mrs. Arvik.— Yes, but you will certainly submit to your husband? And to him alone?

Alberta.— As long as I myself want to. And as I want to. I

do not own him. And he not me. Should I get to like some one else better ——

Mrs. Arvik.— You never will! You are not of that kind.

Alberta.— But if I should, what right has he to shoot me down? Like those two sailors. They did not obey him.

Mrs. Arvik.— That was done in self-defence.

Alberta.— He has told me himself that he grew up handling revolvers. In idle moments he practices shooting at the target.

Mrs. Arvik.— Buy a revolver, you too! Learn how to shoot; I have done so myself. It is interesting.

Alberta (*laughs*).— An interesting marriage, to be sure!

Mrs. Arvik (*with force*).— Yes, to be loved so savagely!

Alberta.— In danger of one's life?

Mrs. Arvik.— Are you a coward?

Alberta.— I don't believe I am.

Mrs. Arvik.— Had I a husband, loving me so madly that he wouldn't suffer any other man to look at me,— how proud and glad I would be, Alberta! First, to be loved so madly — and then, to tame him!

Alberta (*attentively*).— Tame him?

Mrs. Arvik.— Tame him! Karl has never yet known any resistance he has not beaten down. And now these domineering habits have entered into his love. These you have got to break him of. For there isn't the man whom a strong, clever, handsome woman cannot bring down on his knees. If she herself wills it. Yes, to his knees, that he begs, begs!

Alberta.— Listen now, mother!

Mrs. Arvik.— No, now you listen to me! You girls here are trifling about, and bore yourselves because you have a superabundance of unemployed energies. You half engage yourself to one, no, you don't want him; and then with another, with a third. You incur gossip and risky situations!

Alberta.— Now, mother ——

Mrs. Arvik.— And instead of all that the opportunity is offered you now to be loved by a man who will tax all your strength, all your vigilance. A man, a real man, who will tear and wrench you out of all accustomed conditions. I can't think of anything more glorious.

Alberta.— It is you who is in love with him, mother!

Mrs. Arvik.— I am. There has been some longing within me, then, that I was not conscious of. Is that not the case with most of

us? But, even if I were not fond of him — I would, nevertheless, *become* fond of such a young and handsome hero! One who has done so much for me as he has.

Alberta.— Oh, yes, that feat of his in the Japanese war! You are always bringing that up.

Mrs. Arvik.— Do you scorn that? That he broke the blockade four — 4 — times, and afterward sold the vessel at a handsome price? Why, he has become famous for it. I shouldn't be grateful to such a man?

Alberta.— But how does that concern me?

Mrs. Arvik.— Ever so much. It concerns all of us. For that matter, this is all pure affectation on your part. You are just so much like me that if I am fond of some one, you are, too.

Alberta.— Ha, ha!

Mrs. Arvik (*urgently*).— Would you go on in this fashion, if you were not? If you did not care for him at all? At first you were entirely carried away by him.

Alberta.— That will do now. I mean to be my own master. You talk about wars and blockades. I certainly hope you don't think I am a prize?

Mrs. Arvik.— At the beginning I really thought you were! That the naval hero had captured you. (*Instinctively.*) In fact, I believe you still are! In your innermost heart it's just that you are afraid of!

Alberta.— The notions you don't have, mother, once you have set your heart on a thing. Why, I won't even answer you. (*Angrily.*) Now why did you bring him out here again?

Mrs. Arvik.— Because I am sorry for him. I think you ought to be, too.

Alberta.— I?

Mrs. Arvik.— You ought to understand him better. Here he came, nervous and fagged out, and with the malaria. He was to rest up. And then all unawares he suddenly falls in love, violently in love, because for the first time in his life. And you encouraged him, you wicked thing! No, don't you toss your head! You had better take care!

Alberta (*quickly*).— Of what?

Mrs. Arvik.— Of what you are doing. For with him it is a matter of life or death. You ought to know that.

Alberta (*forcibly*).— No, I do not mean to be won by such tactics! I don't want to!

Mrs. Arvik.— Then break him of it! That is a task. And he is worthy of it. Reflect about that! (*Walks up the stairs to the veranda to the right.*)

Mary (*at the same time appears in the door*).

Mrs. Arvik.— Yes, I'm coming! (*Enters house together with* MARY.)

SCENE VI

Alberta (*starts mechanically after her. Stops at the veranda, then crosses to the other side, and mounts staircase to the other veranda. Stops there, laying her one hand on the railing, and looking into the distance*).

Karl Tonning (*from the left. A finely built, handsome man. When he perceives* ALBERTA *he hesitates whether he ought to go on. Ventures to at last, walking cautiously toward the foreground. As she does not notice him he says softly*).— Miss Alberta!

Alberta (*is startled and screams*).— How do you come here? What do you want of me! (*Hurries up and into the house.*)

Karl Tonning (*puts his hands to his head, as if it were about to burst. Stands awhile to collect his thoughts, looks around, gazes long at the door through which she disappeared. Then walks away, once more turning around to look at that door.*)

Alberta (*comes out again*).— That was wrong of me!

Mrs. Arvik (*appears on veranda to left. Looks around*).— Isn't Karl Tonning here? Mary said he was.

Alberta.— He *was* here.

Mrs. Arvik.— Well, and then?

Alberta.— Then he went again.

Mrs. Arvik.— Alberta!

(*Curtain*)

ACT II

SCENE I

(*The same place. The furniture is arranged as at the beginning.*)

Hall (*sits on the bench, but arises as* HELEN *comes out on the veranda to right*).

Helen.— No, they are in the garden, all of them. Alvilde, Gunda, and the others are there also.

Hall.— Then they will stay there a long time. And your mother?

Helen.— She is with them. Shan't we follow them?

Hall.— I should so much like to speak with you alone.

Helen (*scared*).— Here we are never alone. And besides ——

Hall.— Helen!

Helen.— No, don't, no!

Hall.— Are you afraid?

Helen.— Yes.

Hall.— Do you want to go? Or shall I go?

Helen.— Yes.

Hall.— And shan't speak with you alone?

Helen.— No.

Hall (*after a pause*).— Have I, then, been quite mistaken? I thought —— (*Turns away from her.*)

Helen.— What did you think, uncle?

Hall (*turns around to her again*).— That you liked to speak with me.

Helen.— But I do like to.

Hall.— That summer you visited us in Nordland, ——

Helen.— Alvilde was along then.

Hall.— Not always. By no means always. You liked to go with me on my walks ——

Helen.— In order to speak about what we studied for the confirmation. Yes.

Hall.— We spoke also about other things.

Helen.— I remember every word you said.

Hall.— Do you remember equally well all I said since I came here?

Helen.— I believe I do.

Hall.— Also what I did not say?

Helen.— I don't understand you.

Hall.— That which you did not say is just what I remember best.

Helen (*looks around*).

Hall.— What is it?

Helen.— I thought I heard some one.

Hall.— I suppose it was yourself you heard. The words you did not say?

Helen.— No, uncle!

Hall.— I heard them. Ever since one summer night in Nordland. You certainly remember it?

Helen.— At the fowling cliff?

Hall.— Yes, at the fowling cliff! I knew you did! We looked at the midnight sun together. The sky was ablaze, and so were the mountains; but the sea? The sea lay below there quite black.

Helen (*eagerly*).— You must not forget the fragrant air we moved in. The air made fragrant by the heather. It was so strong that it took away one's mind from all else. All else was far away and grand, but cold. Oh, so cold! But the heather, that was brisk and fresh and young, and it was all about us.

Hall.— Then you took a spike of that heather and fastened it nicely in my buttonhole.

Helen.— Yes.

Hall.— But just at that moment we were startled. Something happened.

Helen.— The steamer that approached the fowling cliff! My, but wasn't there an uproar then!

Hall.— All had been so silent. Even as if all life were swallowed up by eternity. And then life arose again! The scream of a hundred thousand birds.

Helen.— All the air was wings and screams.

Hall.— Then we saw what had slumbered in the silence. Can you recall what I likened this to? I see you do, Helen. And then I heard what you thought. But I pretended not to hear it.

Helen (*is silent*).

Hall.— I did not believe it becoming in me to hear it. But when I came down here, and you said the same to me here — without words, always without words! — then I resisted no longer. It was too lovely to hear ——

Helen.— No, uncle, not about that!

Hall.— Helen!

Helen.— No, no!

Hall (*gazes at her, then seats himself on the uttermost right end of the bench, and leans his right arm on the table*).— Fine weather to-day!

Helen (*makes no reply*).

Hall.— Won't you sit down, too?

Helen (*hesitates*).

Hall (*looks at her*).

Helen (*then comes, but seats herself on the uttermost left end*).

Hall.— A pity the bench is not longer!

Helen (*laughs and moves nearer*).

Hall (*leans toward her*).— I have spoken with your father to-day,

twice — I am coming right from him. Will you let me tell you what he said?

Helen (*arising*).— No!

Hall.— Now you are agreeing with him, Helen. And that is hard lines.

Helen.— What did father say?

Hall.— Are you afraid?

Helen.— Yes. Because father says so many things.

Hall.— He does. But what he said to me a moment ago was the worst I could have heard.

Helen (*comes and sits down*).— What was it, uncle?

Hall.— He said, she is too young.

Helen (*waits a while before she says*) Did he say that? And what did you answer?

Hall.— I said that I did not believe it. But now I believe it.

Helen.— *Do* you really, uncle?

Hall.— Helen, can't you comprehend that I am more afraid now than you are?

Helen.— Afraid?

Hall.— No one ought to take things for granted. And that I have done.

Helen.— What do you mean? Take for granted ——?

Hall.— I had become so fond of you that nothing existed any longer in which you were not also. I can't any longer do without you. And that is my own fault. I was so sure and was willing to run my chances. To be sure, I was well enough aware of your timidity. But that, I thought, was only natural in a young girl in love. It often shows itself that way.

Helen.— Uncle!

Hall.— Oh, how happy I was, Helen. So arrogantly happy that I did not see at all that you were too young.

Helen.— But you were not wrong. Because I am not at all too young. How stupid of father to say that.

Hall.— Yes, but what is it, then? Why are you so afraid?

Helen.— I am not at all afraid! I am not one of that kind at all. Just ask and I shall answer you.

Hall.— Do tell me, then, what all this means? You don't know how you have frightened me.

Helen.— It's — it's because it's so awfully awkward — (*bursts into tears*).

Hall.— Awkward that a real young girl ——

Helen.— Yes, yes!

Hall.— Awkward, to the others?

Helen.— Yes, yes!

Hall.— Did they tease you?

Helen.— Oh! Every day!

Hall.— But how did they guess it?

Helen.— I couldn't conceal it. I have loved you since I was a child. From the time you visited us here. That's why I wanted to go north to you, to be confirmed by you. That's why —— No, I can't tell you all about it. But I could hug you every moment,— didn't you feel that?

Hall (*moving nearer*).— Yes, indeed! But that's just why I was so frightened ——

Helen.— Yes, such a silly little girl as I — and you,— you so much older and so clever, and so much looked up to by all people and — yes, it was so awkward, awkward, awkward. (*Stamps with her feet and hides her face.*)

Hall.— Ha, ha, ha! (*Snatches her up from the bench and embraces her warmly and tenderly.*)

Helen (*tears herself away*).— For heaven's sake, uncle, if any one saw us! They may have come in again!

Hall.— You must try to overcome this!

Helen.— If only I could!

Hall.— Because else I do believe you are too young.

Helen.— Let see it who will! (*Throws her arms about his neck.*)

Scene II

Mrs. Arvik (*in a second story window to left, which she opens*).— But Helen!

Helen (*screams and lets go*).

Alberta (*in a second story window to right, which she raises*).— But Helen!

Alvilde, Gunda, Josepha (*have also opened windows*).

Helen (*screams and casts herself to* Hall's *breast to hide herself*).

Hall (*folds her in his arms and looks up*).— Helen is with me. What do you want of her?

Mrs. Arvik.— Close the windows, children! (*They close theirs. She closes her own.*)

Helen.— If you had not held me I should have sunk into the ground.

Hall.— But *now* it is all over?

Helen.— Yes, just think, I believe it is ——

Hall.— Oh, Helen, how you —— No, I haven't words — (*after a pause*). My dear, go in to your mother. I am coming right after you.

Helen (*enters house to the right*).

Hall (*follows her with his eyes. So soon as he is alone he puts one knee on the ground, folds his hands and lays his face in them*).

Scene III

Alvilde (*from the right, stands a while moved, and then says*).— Father!

Hall (*rises immediately, turns to her and opens his arms*).

Alvilde (*comes into his embrace*). (*Silence.*)

Hall.— Have you long known of it?

Alvilde.— Yes.

Hall.— Do you think it strange?

Alvilde.— Dear father!

Hall (*taking her head between his hands and looking into her eyes*). — No, tell me! frankly!

Alvilde.— If you are happy ——

Hall (*releases her*).— You think it is strange. I do so myself. I who have a daughter like you! So much like your mother. And so interesting and clever. I said so to myself a hundred times. But there are forces within one that are stronger than what one says to oneself a hundred times.

Alvilde.— I can understand that. And so my best wishes to you, father!

Hall.— Thanks, oh, many thanks! (*Embraces her.*) You are weeping?

Alvilde.— It is nothing, father! (*Turns from him.*)

Hall.— Oh,— it is *that* I have been fearing.

Alvilde.— You must not.

Hall.— How sorry I am, child!

Alvilde.— It is only the first moment.

Hall.— Do you believe ——

Alvilde.— Yes, indeed. Especially if I can get away now.

Hall.— At once? Without?

Alvilde.— Without speaking to anybody.

Hall.— Alvilde?

Alvilde.— Yes, indeed! And I think also that you and Helen ought to be alone a while, just now. And then I am out of the way of you two —— (*Hesitates.*)

Hall.— I understand you.

Alvilde.— For all concerned it is best if I'm not here. Don't you think so?

Hall (*dispirited*).— Maybe.

Alvilde.— You have, of course, not thought about this. But I have. Uncle has just given me money to travel with.

Hall.— To London?

Alvilde.— Yes, to London, to the Hawkins's.

Hall.— Not only promised it? You know it is difficult to get any money from him.

Alvilde.— I have got it. Right here.

Hall.— Let me see!

Alvilde (*shows it to him*).

Hall.— So much? That is quite unlike him.

Alvilde (*laughs*).— So think I. (*Nearer and whispering.*) May I not leave right away?

Hall.— Now?

Alvilde.— Yes, now. I've got everything ready packed; I hardly take anything along. I shall buy everything in London!

Hall.— So to the city right off? And then?

Alvilde.— Off to-night with ——

Hall.— To-night? Why, then I must see you to the boat.

Alvilde.— No, no! No one must know that I leave to-night.

Hall.— Why?

Alvilde.— Why, because I happen to know of some one who is leaving for London to-morrow. Some one here. And him I don't want to travel with. Under no circumstance! Therefore I leave to-night at once. And no one must know about it. No, don't ask me, father!

Hall.— All right! You are glad to get to London?

Alvilde.— Immensely.

Hall.— You are glad to meet our old friends again ——

Alvilde.— Not only that. But to begin life over again.

Hall.— What do you mean by that?

Alvilde.— I feel as if I were done with everything here. (*Weeps.*)

Hall.— Alvilde!

Alvilde.— Pardon me, father! I did not mean to say that. I don't know how I came to. No, don't say anything, father! Do

let me go!

Hall.— Yes. But, then, I must at least ——

Alvilde.— No, no! Good by, good, dear father. (*Embraces him.*) And be happy! (*Weeps.*)

Hall.— Thanks, dear Alvilde, thanks! But just one single word.

Alvilde (*separates from him and listens with anxious interest*).

Hall.— Do not be jealous of Helen.

Alvilde.— I shall try. (*Exit quickly.*)

Scene IV

Mrs. Arvik (*from door of the veranda to the left*).— Heavens, but isn't that child happy! (*Coming down to* Hall.) Come into my arms! (*They embrace each other.*)

Helen (*comes out and toward them*).

Hall.— Did you understand it all?

Mrs. Arvik.— No. That she was fond of you, that, yes. And that the others teased her about you, that I had heard of. But this! Why, you were the husband of my youngest sister. Who could have dreamed that you were to become the husband of my youngest daughter?

Hall.— That is God's own providence.

Mrs. Arvik.— Do you believe so? He is made responsible for so many things. But this I shall say, that a young girl ought best be married to an elderly man. Then both she and we are rid of all trouble, once and for all. (*Looks out toward the left.*) What's that? (*Two men enter, carrying a great big trunk between them. They themselves are loaded down with packages and portmanteaus. They set all down in the background and walk out again.*)

Hall.— The steamer from the south must have arrived.

Mrs. Arvik (*looks at her watch*).— To be sure. But who is going to come to us from the south? (*The men enter again with a still bigger trunk and other things, and walk out again.*)

Helen.— But mother? (*Hurries up to background.*)

Mrs. Arvik.— What is it, child? Do you know these things?

Helen.— Yes, they are Marna's.

Mrs. Arvik (*walking toward background*).— Marna's?

Helen.— And out there ——

Mrs. Arvik (*calls out to the men*).— Stop with that! The trunks are to go in that building there! (*Points to the left.*) Carry out these things, too. (*To the others.*) Because if it is Marna who is paying

us a visit —— But that I haven't heard a word of. (*Both walk forward again.*)

Helen.— And with all her outfit! What does that mean, mother?

Mrs. Arvik.— Well, it is scarcely all of it. But much too much for a mere visit. Or what do you two think?

Helen.— That something must have happened.

Mrs. Arvik.— After only five months' marriage! How?

Hall.— Still Arvik spoke to-day as if — (*checks himself*).

Mrs. Arvik.— As if ——

Hall.— Well,— as if something was the matter.

Mrs. Arvik.— With the young marriage?

Hall.— The barometer stood at storm, he said. He had received a letter.

Mrs. Arvik.— And that he tells no one of us?

Alberta (*from the left*).— Ah, mother?

Mrs. Arvik.— What is it, child?

Helen.— Marna. Is she here?

Alberta.— No. But Gunda has spoken with her.

Mrs. Arvik.— With Marna?

Alberta.— She was on board, but traveled on ——

Mrs. Arvik.— She traveled on——

Alberta.— To the city. She will return at once.

Mrs. Arvik.— But what does all this mean?

Helen.— What did she herself say?

Alberta.— She said to Gunda that she was going to stay at home for good, now. She did not mention his name. Neither did she say any more.

Helen.— And Gunda didn't ask?

Alberta.— No. She knows Marna's ways, you know.

Hall.— Hasn't she written to you at all?

Mrs. Arvik.— No.

Hall.— Well, she must be a curious person, indeed, if such happenings can come on unexpectedly to you all.

Scene V

Arvik (*has come in unseen from the right*).— Not to me!

Mrs. Arvik.— So, you are there! What's that you said to Hall?

Arvik.— To Hall? I don't remember. But I have just got a letter from Marna's husband.

All.— What does he write?

Arvik.— He writes that he has confessed to Marna that he— (*checks himself*).

All.— That he ——

Arvik.— Well, I believe I ought to express it some other way. That he doesn't get enough (*stops*).

All.— That he doesn't get enough ——

Arvik.— Well, blame it, I've got to express it some other way still. In short, then, he is not satisfied with her.

(*Silence.*)

Mrs. Arvik (*at last*).— After five months' marriage?

Arvik.— Oh, what concerns the time ——

Alberta.— Proud, high-spirited Marna!

Hall (*to* Mrs. Arvik).— I must say as you, after five months' marriage!

Arvik.— A good many experiences may be made inside of five months, my friend.

Mrs. Arvik (*sharply*).— What do you mean by that?

Arvik.— Oh, well! That she does not suit with him.

The three women.— Does not suit with him?

Mrs. Avrik.— How do you mean *that?*

Arvik.— Is not suited to his needs. (*Aside to* Hall.) Dear me, how shall I express myself?

Helen.— You will please not insult Marna!

Arvik.— Insult her?

Helen.— She is a splendid woman.

Alberta.— All who know Marna like her.

Mrs. Arvik.— Marna has character. Has a noble and good character. And that is not so very common.

Alberta.— I can't understand this!

Arvik.— Marna has many fine qualities. But is she a wife?

All the three women.— A wife?

Mrs. Arvik.— Did you not assist in marrying her, yourself?

Arvik.— I did. She wanted to marry, by all means. Nothing was to be done about it. And you all wanted the same thing. (*To* Mrs. Arvik.) You especially. (*Takes a step aside at the same time.*)

Hall.— But, if you had your doubts — why didn't you voice them?

Arvik.— Doubts, or rather, no doubts at all. But my opinion does not count here. When these four heads here are laid together.

Then it is decided, all right.

Alberta.— No, don't let us enter into that any more! But what does it mean that a woman so gifted and tactful as Marna,— and so good and so prepossessing,— that she should not be fit to be a wife?

Arvik.— That involves other matters, which,— well, which it isn't so very easy to be plain about.

Mrs. Arvik.— For example?

Arvik.— If I could mention one example I might as well mention the whole.

Mrs. Arvik.— No evasions, if you please.

Arvik.— I believe that not only Marna, but a host of women are not fit to be wives.

Alberta, Helen.— Why?

Alberta.— Why don't you say why?

Hall.— I don't know Marna; but I agree with you that more and more women are becoming unfit to be wives. Our civilization seems to tend in that direction.

Mrs. Arvik.— They are too independent, you mean?

Hall.— That too. For that matter, it isn't my opinion that just that is at all undesirable.

Arvik.— Oh no, no. But they want to get married, all of them! And there's where the mischief comes in.

Alberta, Helen.— How do you know about that?

Mrs. Arvik.— Don't mind him, children! Why shall the blame be put on woman? I think it is the men who are becoming more and more unfit for marriage.

Hall.— They, too. Both parties. It is tending in that direction. You are right.

Mrs. Arvik.— Yes, but how does that concern us here? We aren't in a women's meeting? We are not discussing marriage here? Out with it!

Alberta, Helen.— Yes, let us hear about it!

Mrs. Arvik.— Why is Marna unfit to be a wife? Because she has talent for business? For that she has. Is it because she is independent of her husband, is it that which renders her unfit? Why, then I must be so myself.

Arvik.— Perhaps. Perhaps that is another reason.

Mrs. Arvik.— And that you say to me?

Arvik.— Yes, why not? In my judgment, it turns woman's thoughts, her interests and aspirations in other directions. And that the husband feels himself a loser by. They may, for that matter,

be excellent people, both of them. But don't suit each other, see?

Mrs. Arvik (*with great force*).— Is he, then, such a comprehensive personage that he can demand a talented woman's every thought and interest? Can he fill them altogether? No, that is too absurd! Let us rather turn the matter about; why is he discontented with such a woman as Marna? Is he a superficial, desultory character? Can't he stick to one thing? Or is he a gay Lothario? I am beginning to understand.

Arvik.— It isn't five weeks ago since you — and all of you — regarded him as the most amiable and admirable man you knew!

Alberta, *Helen*.— Don't answer him, mother!

Arvik.— No, that is certainly wisest.

Mrs. Arvik.— You are not speaking your whole mind. There is something you are dodging. Why should just Marna be so unfit for marriage?

Arvik.— With him! I said, with him.

Alberta, *Helen*.— No, you didn't say so!

Alberta.— You said 'unfit to be a wife.' In general.

Arvik.— Oh, well, then I thought it. There may possibly exist some husband she is suited for.

Mrs. Arvik.— I should think so, Marna!

Arvik.— Well, yes. But he is to be considered, he too. With his demands on marriage — which, you see, are not hers.

Mrs. Arvik.— What demands? You are getting tedious.

Alberta, *Helen*.—Yes, what demands?

Arvik.— Well, then, deuce take it, such as make a fellow get himself a mistress.

(*Silence.*)

Alberta (*bursting into laughter*).— No, to be sure, Marna can't share those!

Helen (*likewise*).— He can have them all to himself!

Alberta.— Marna will not lower herself to approve of that sort! You are right in that!

Helen.— They are not in keeping with Marna.

Alberta.— So the gentleman has permitted himself to have a mistress! How refined! Somebody in the house, perhaps?

Helen.— Is it the cook? Or is it the chamber maid?

Mrs. Arvik (*to* Arvik).— Is it your opinion that Marna should put up with that?

Arvik.— I didn't say that! By no means! It is all a matter of individual taste.

Hall (*toward him*).— What's that you're saying? Of individual taste?

Arvik.— No, no! But it's really quite superfluous to discuss this now! Now that they have once separated! He is going away.

The two girls.— Going away?

Arvik.— The plan has been in his mind for a long time. And when this happened. I had a letter from him yesterday; I got a telegram from him to-day. He is going away. That's the best end it could take. Isn't that so?

Mrs. Arvik.— Yes, indeed. I like that well enough. Where is he going?

Arvik.— He has had only one aim always, Australia.

The others.— Australia?

Arvik.— He is a clever man. He will make his way wherever he goes. And *there* lies the future.

Mrs. Arvik.— For those with a wife and a mistress? I doubt that very much!

Alberta (*toward him*).— Because he is surely not going to travel alone!

Helen (*likewise*).— Will he take the cook along?

Alberta.— Or the chambermaid?

Mrs. Arvik.— He will take them both. Else it wouldn't be a case of wife and mistress!

Alberta.— Of course! He will take both of them along!

Arvik.— I don't know what he is going to do. I only know that it is his own business.

Alberta, Helen.— Of course!

Mrs. Arvik.— You don't say so!

Alberta.— But we surely have a right to ask?

Hall (*has meanwhile been walking toward the background, chuckling, and has kept there. Now he walks quickly forward again*).—I wonder if that is not Marna who is coming here?

Alberta, Helen.— Already?

Hall.— I see a lady coming below by the road — she is walking up slowly. As far as I can see it is an elegantly dressed lady.

Alberta, Helen.— That must be Marna.

Mrs. Arvik.— The poor child! (*To Arvik.*) And here you are making fun! And getting us to join in it with you! Come, let us all go to meet her!

Alberta, Helen.— Yes!
Hall (*offers his arm to* Mrs. Arvik, Alberta *and* Helen *follow*).

Scene VI

Arvik.— Helen!
Helen (*stops*).— Yes.
Arvik.— Oh listen! Just a word with you!
Helen.— Afterwards, father! (*About to follow the others.*)
Arvik.— No, now!
Helen.— But, father ——
Arvik.— Why, you are engaged, now.
Helen.— Yes.
Arvik.— And to me you don't even mention it!
Helen (*comes toward him*).— Yes, indeed;— but uncle said — (*checks herself*).
Arvik.— That *he* had spoken with me?
Helen.— Yes.
Arvik.— Is that enough?
Helen.— No. And I was going to — but then all this occurred, —pardon me, papa! But can't I now go to meet Marna, I, too?
Arvik.— You went right away to your mother about it.
Helen (*makes no reply*).
Arvik.— And now you are only thinking of how you may get away from me.
Helen.— But, father ——
Arvik.— Oh, well, then. No more about that. Come here to me.
Helen (*comes closer*).
Arvik.— Are you fond of him?
Helen.— How can you ask?
Arvik.— But he is old, isn't he?
Helen.— Not that I can see.
Arvik.— Now, when be becomes real old, and you are still young? Have you thought of that?
Helen.— That I must help him, then? Nurse him?
Arvik.— Yes.
Helen.— That will be the most welcome of all.
Arvik (*joyously*).— Oh, the sweet girl you are!
Helen.— Thanks. May I go now?
Arvik.— Right away! Just one more thing. He has strong

passions, has Hall. Does that offend you?

Helen.— I do not understand you.

Arvik.— So it does not offend you?

Helen.— No, on the contrary!

Arvik.— Well, if that's the case! You are my own dear girl!

Helen.— May I go now?

Arvik.— We shall go, both of us. (*Takes her arm. They pass out to the left.*) (*Empty scene.*)

Karl Tonning (*enters from the right, gloomy and resolute. Stops looking about. Looks especially toward the windows on the second story to right. Indignation and suffering show in his face and his attitude. He stands quiet a while, pondering. All at once he hears voices from the left. Withdraws to the background, and then cautiously leaves the scene to the right, walking backwards*).

Scene VII

Marna (*enters slowly, in close embrace with her mother, behind them* Hall. *After him* Helen *and* Alberta. *Lastly,* Arvik. As they *are turning toward the front.*)

Arvik (*says softly, as if speaking to himself*).— 'A sad procession slowly moves ——'*

Mrs. Arvik (*leads* Marna *forward to the bench at the table, where the latter seats herself, leans her elbows on it and bursts into tears*).

All (*place themselves about her,* Arvik *at a little distance*).

Mrs. Arvik.— Ah, my child! That you should return thus.

Marna (*weeps still more, arises and turns away*).

Mrs. Arvik.— Do you want to go to your rooms? (Marna is *seen to nod.*) The guest rooms to the South! (*She points up to the upper end of the house to the left, second floor.*) Helen, tell Mary!

Marna (*walks slowly into the house, leaning on* Helen. *Those who remain are silent whilst the two are leaving. They remain silent for some time after the two have entered the left wing of the house and are seen no longer. Then suddenly*),

Mrs. Arvik (*turns to the others*).— But that I make bold to say——

Hall (*with his hand on her arm*).— Oh, no, don't make bold to say anything now!

Mrs. Arvik.— That I make bold to say that marriage is a downright nasty thing. (*Walks forward.*)

Alberta (*follows*).— But mother ——

*The first line of Björnson's own poem, "For the Wounded" (1871).

Mrs. Arvik.— A swinish thing! If a mind so sensitive and noble as ——

Arvik (*interrupts her*).— Look here, dear! (*Goes toward her.*) Shall we really be so very solemn about all this?

Mrs. Arvik.— Did you not see her grief? Did you not see how she was mortified in her innermost soul? No one can suffer more in such matters than Marna! Because no one else ——

Arvik (*interrupting her*).— Now look here! Didn't you see that she had gotten herself a traveling suit after the newest fashion? And didn't you see that she had the last number of the *Shipping Gazette* under her arm?

Mrs. Arvik.— To think that such things can deceive you! She is so strong, Marna is. She does not give herself up to despair. And preserves appearances. But what she is suffering, I know! Shame on you that you don't feel that, you, too!

Arvik.— I do. But these signs generally point to recovery, I should think. Besides, on the whole, this condition is preferable to her previous one.

Mrs. Arvik.— Of course. But to think that a woman so honest, and so far above what is low, as Marna, should be exposed to something so ——

Helen (*who has joined them*).—You should have seen her, father, when we came up to her room, how she threw herself down on the bed and sobbed bitterly.

Mrs. Arvik.— Did she! Poor child! Poor, poor child! (*Alberta weeps.*)

Arvik.— I hope you understand that I am sorry for her, too. I only want to guard against exaggeration. Because that makes things worse still.

Alberta (*emphatically*).— There is no exaggeration here! The whole thing is shameful, beastly!

Helen (*angrily*).— That's what I say, too! With all my heart!

Arvik.— That is just what *I* call exaggeration.

Mrs. Arvik.— Our indignation, our sympathy? You ought to be ashamed, because you don't show it yourself!

Alberta.— You are surely not against us in this too, father?

Arvik.— I am not at all against you. But I want to try and get you to understand that this may pass off. There are signs pointing that way. It's that I mean.

Mrs. Arvik.— Did one ever hear the like of it? Isn't it just as bad now, even if it is going to pass off, later on sometime?

Arvik.— Yes, indeed. It is bad. It is very bad. Let me add that those who are wounded in their vanity are most deeply wounded for the moment. But it passes off more quickly.

Mrs. Arvik (*exasperated*).— It is anything but handsome at this time to speak about the vanity of your child.

Hall.— I certainly admire you, brother in law!

Arvik.— Help yourself.

Hall.— Not your psychology; no, I admire the levity you take this with.

Mrs. Arvik.— He takes all things that way.

Marna (*opens a window in the second story to right. The midmost.*)

(*Silence. All look up.*)

Marna.— I just want to tell you, father, that you are nasty.

Arvik.— Are you there, my girl?

Marna.— I heard you. (*Closes window.*)

Arvik (*with raised voice*).— You might as well come down to us.

Mrs. Arvik (*likewise*).— Yes, do so, Marna! Come down and let us discuss matters.

Marna (*opens the window again*).— I am coming. (*Closes it.*)

Mrs. Arvik.— Let us sit down! (*Sits down,* Arvik *also.*)

Alberta.— She is coming this way (*pointing to door leading to veranda*). I hear her in the living-room. (*The two who are sitting change their positions.*)

Marna (*without hat, appears in the door and remains standing there*).— Father ought not to be surprised that a woman may be too proud to show her sorrow openly. She conceals it with an elegant gown. She conceals it with enterprise. And then curiosity and gossip will not approach her too closely. Nor pity, neither.

Alberta.— I understand you, Marna!

Helen.— I, too!

Hall (*toward* Helen. *She leans against him.*)

Marna (*forward to railing*).— But you don't know what this means. For none of you knows what it means to be betrayed.

Mrs. Arvik.— No.

Marna.— I am going to tell you. Imagine some one who does not like to confide in any one. A young woman who likes best to keep all to herself. It became more precious to her, because no one knew about it. And then imagine that a young friend came to her and asked her to transfer all her secrets over to him; because she was the only one for him. Either her or none. He was brisk and merry,

he had great plans which he immediately confided to her. She felt as if she all at once became richer by this, and more independent. And so she moved over to him. She deposited her secrets with him. She did not know them all herself until she saw them again in his eyes. Even what was most deeply concealed she transferred to him; but without mentioning it (*is moved*). Until one day she discovered that it had been mentioned to some one else! To one he meant thereby to ingratiate himself with. And she was to be delighted to know how much more perfect she was. How much more precious to him. That's what it is to be betrayed. To be stripped before some one else. Stripped by him whom all her secrets had been transferred to. To be kept with him in silence. That's what it is to be betrayed. (*She goes in again and is seen afterwards up in the window.*) (*The women touched.* MRS. ARVIK *and* ALBERTA *have seated themselves.* HELEN *clings to* HALL.)

Hall (*subdued*).— You ought to be alone now. I shall be here again within a short while. (*Walks softly out to right.*)

Mary (*coming forward from background to left*).

Arvik (*as she passes him is aroused and asks*).— What is it?

Mary.— The telephone.

Arvik.— For me?

Mary.— No, for Mrs.

Mrs. Arvik (*arises, ascends veranda to left, and enters the house*).

Mary (*goes back where she came from*).

Alberta.— Well, what do you say to that, father?

Arvik.— I must admit that is worse than I suspected. Ugly business.

Alberta.— Yes, has any one heard the like of it?

Arvik.— Oh, yes. Oh, yes. Men are so coarse.

Alberta.— Oh, how I wish I was in Marna's place! *I* could get over it; but Marna ——

Helen.— Marna will never get over it.

Arvik.— I am also afraid it will be difficult for her.

Alberta.— Naturally. (*Arises.*) But, then, how *could* she? No, don't let us begin anew on this!

Helen.— He was so handsome. And so merry. And so indescribably in love ——

Alberta.— Marna wanted to get married.

Arvik.— That's it. She wanted to get married.

Alberta.— She longed to be independent, Marna did. She believed that she — (*startled*). But what is it, mother?

Mrs. Arvik (*out of door to left, on to veranda*).— Alberta!

Alberta (*as above*).— Yes, what is it?

Mrs. Arvik.— I told you so, child! Aunt telephoned me just now and told me that she had to notify the police. She had become afraid of him.

Alberta (*utters a low cry*).

Arvik.— Who?

Mrs. Arvik (*coming down*).— Karl. Karl Tonning. He fired a revolver. In his room and in the halls. Everybody in the house came running. Then he rushed out and away.

Arvik.— This way?

Mrs. Arvik (*who has now joined them*).— Only afterwards Aunt had the idea that something might have happened out here, and that it was here he was going. And so she notified the police. And now she reported that he had really been seen on his way here.

Arvik (*who stands farther back than the others, unconsciously looks around and cries*).— There he is! (*Hurries to background to right and disappears.*)

Alberta and Helen (*both scream and cling to each other*).

Mrs. Arvik (*puts her right hand into her pocket*).—Don't be afraid, children! I took my revolver along ——

Alberta, Helen (*interrupt her, frightened*).— But, mother!

Mrs. Arvik.— When I heard about the burglary out here a few days ago, I loaded it.

Arvik (*returns*).— No,— I saw no one. That's mighty strange; because I saw it as plainly —— But what has happened? Revolver shooting out here?

Mrs. Arvik.— Yes, I have mine along.

Arvik.— Well, well! That's what I always say — he who wants to marry into this family, he is going to have some surprising experiences. For example, to be shot. What has happened here?

Mrs. Arvik.— Nothing.

Arvik.— Hm! Yes, but revolvers generally don't discharge of themselves. Something must have happened. A kind of prelude?

Mrs. Arvik.— No, indeed. What should have happened?

Arvik.— To be sure, *I* don't know. Because I am always kept on the outside. But if this is to go on that way, to get one's daughters married, I think I shall prefer having my room on the roof. It is becoming too unsafe down here.

Mrs. Arvik.— Yes, there are certain parents who are as egotistic as that.

Arvik.— Now, honestly,— don't you also think that this is almost enough?

Mrs. Arvik.— Oh, how much that is like you! So soon as there is any unpleasantness you decamp.

Arvik.— I admit that I like best to be left in peace. And have a little comfort, too. As things are now, I don't know every time I come home what has happened meanwhile. Whether I shall find a couple of trunks, because our married daughter has come home again, or whether I shall get my brains blown out by the revolver of my second daughter's fiancé.

Alberta.— He is not my fiancé.

Arvik.— All the worse, then! If even those who court you shoot at us at random, I must say that this is a new and very dangerous way of courting. Why, then I prefer, as I said before, to have a room on the roof. Or to move to the woods.

Alberta and Helen (*laugh*).

Arvik.— Yes, you may laugh, but —— Why, I'll be — if he isn't there! (*Quickly to background to left. This time the others also rush after him,* Mrs. Arvik *with her right hand in her pocket.* Arvik *disappears; the others remain.*)

Helen (*after a while*).— Why, there isn't anybody.

Alberta (*relieved*).— Nobody at all! (*They come front again.*)

Helen.— What's the matter with father?

Mrs. Arvik.— He is working up his imagination. It isn't the first time, you know.

Helen.— But that is strange. Father, who is so healthy.

Arvik (*returning*).— Either I've become crazy — and that wouldn't be so surprising — or, or — Or there is somebody!

Mrs. Arvik.— Invisible, do you believe?

Helen.— Ghosts?

Arvik.— I don't believe in ghosts.

Mrs. Arvik.— But why should you see something we others can't see?

Arvik.— I see a good deal, I do, that you don't see.

Mrs. Arvik.— Then why don't you tell us about it?

Arvik.— Because no attention is paid to what I say.

Mrs. Arvik.— Are you coming back to that again? (*Solemnly.*) I tell you,— I tell you, William, and all will agree with me in this, in this house everything is done with a consideration for you. Everything.

Alberta, Helen.— Everything!

Arvik.— For *me?*

Alberta, Helen.— For you.

Marna (*opening her window*).— For you!

Mrs. Arvik.—We do nothing without having consideration for you.

All three.— Nothing!

Alberta.— And to think of all we don't do for your sake!

All four.— Oh!

Arvik.— Well,— well, this you have got to explain to me. (*Sits down.*) For this is the queerest thing I have ever heard. Well, then! You begin, Helen!

Helen.— All right! I am going to begin with the least. We others have the same taste as mother has. For example, we are awfully fond of things in the soup. As in fruit soup, beef soup, fish soup, vegetable soup ——

Arvik (*interrupting her*).— Oh that mess! Not a bit of nourishment in it.

Helen.—Consequently no soup is brought to the table. Isn't this having consideration for you?

Arvik.— Now, do you really miss fruit soup, for example?

Helen.— No, indeed! Because we eat it in the kitchen. With the servants.

Mrs. Arvik.— Let me also add a little sample. Of the last few days. When there was a burglary committed recently out here, right next door, at Karstens', I wanted to try my revolver. But you don't like that. So I did not think of doing it in a way that you could hear it. I bided my time till you were away.

Arvik.— When I was up in the forest, yes. You don't believe, then, that one can hear shots up there?

Mrs. Arvik.— Did you hear them?

Helen.— And you don't like sweetmeats and candies ——

Arvik.— Why, they are only good for spoiling one's teeth with.

Helen.— We have excellent teeth, all of us.

Mrs. Arvik.— I attended to that.

Helen.— We get our supply of it from the city; we eat it so you don't see it. Or do you want any ——

Alberta (*up to him*).— You don't like us to give balls.

Arvik.— Getting warm, now!

Alberta.— You like a ball only with a few couples.

Arvik.— The other thing isn't a ball at all.

Alberta.— But we can't help giving a larger ball. Because we attend those the others give.

Arvik.— Well, what do you do about it?

Alberta.— We wait till you're away. At some agriculturists' meeting, forest board session, or something of the kind.

Arvik.— And then ——

Alberta.— Then we order a steamer for the guests and a band from the city. And then we give a great big ball. And have fireworks on the ground at night! We have grand times!

Arvik.— I believe it. And this you call having consideration for me? Quite a new way. It ought to be recommended!

Mrs. Arvik.— We certainly have the consideration not to disturb you. Not to do anything you dislike.

Arvik.— Excepting on the sly?

Mrs. Arvik.— Such harmless things! We do what we can. And it does not cost you a cent.

Arvik.— Well, I certainly hope so! To think that nobody has spoken to me about this? Neither neighbors nor relatives and friends? Very strange.

Mrs. Arvik.— For the good reason that all agree with us. All think you are unreasonable.

Helen.— We, father, we have consideration for your unreasonableness. Isn't that nice of us?

Arvik.— It isn't good for you to keep company with Alvilde! The rogue you have become! Was there any more, Alberta?

Alberta.— Any more? Why, there is something almost every day. We have gotten so accustomed to it that we don't keep account any longer. That's the truth, if we at last are to be candid about it. Because we suffer under it.

Arvik.— You do? That suffering has assumed ever so pleasant forms, it seems.

Alberta.— And how about all that we have to do without, father?

Arvik.— Do without? You?

Alberta.— Because you don't agree with us in anything.

Arvik.— For example?

Alberta.— In traveling! Why, we never get anywhere.

Arvik.— Yes, but you have traveled!

Alberta, Helen.— One single time!

Alberta.— As far as Copenhagen!

Arvik.— It was our intention to travel farther, wasn't it?

Alberta.— Our intention, yes! It was our intention that traveled farther. We remained in Copenhagen.

Arvik.— And how about the Thorvaldsen Museum, the monkeys,

and the beech forest, and old Rosenborg ——

Alberta (*interrupts him*).— Why, we could hardly drag you along! Once only you were along to the theater.

Arvik.— To look at high kicking!

Helen.— We had never seen a ballet!

Alberta.— Why we never get anywhere!

Arvik.— All right! Do you want to go along to London?

Alberta.— I? When?

Arvik.— Right away! For instance, to-morrow?

Alberta.— With whom? With you?

Arvik.— With me. And some interesting company. Will you?

Alberta.— Do you really mean it?

Arvik.— Always you are asking, whether I mean what I say.

Alberta.— Yes, because no one knows for sure when you are joking or in earnest.

Arvik.— You don't let me into your secrets. So I may be permitted to have some myself, mayn't I? Isn't that fair?

Alberta.— Do you really mean to travel? You who never do? Oh, you are only joking!

Arvik.— Do you believe so? That I mightn't feel like doing something you all didn't know anything about? On the sly?

Mrs. Arvik.—Oh, stop your nonsense now, William! We don't believe one word you say.

All three.— No — oo!

Arvik.— Is that so? Oh, well, that depends (*looks up*). How about you, Marna? Don't you also want to contribute? Is there anything can you think of?

Marna.— Is there? The most important of all! Why, you can never get us dressed plain enough.

All three.— No, but Marna! ! !

Marna.— Yes, indeed, we are going to settle accounts now!

Arvik (*attentive*).— What's that?

Mrs. Arvik.— Nothing! Nothing that concerns you. Let that do now!

Marna.— It just concerns father.

Arvik.— Now you all keep quiet and let Marna —! What is it?

Marna.— Out of consideration for you, father, we went about dressed like peasant biddies, all of us, especially mother. In fact, she still goes about that way, out of consideration for you. In fact, the others, too.

Arvik (*to* MRS. ARVIK).— Aren't they dressed nice enough, the children?

Marna.— You can't judge about that any longer. You have grown to be a farmer, father. But we surely couldn't go to the city that way. That is to say, when we went there alone or with mother, and that we did pretty nearly always. So we managed to persuade mother ——

Mrs. Arvik.— Why do you bring that up ——

Arvik.— Hush! You managed to persuade mother?

Marna.— To keep nice clothes at aunt's — walking gowns, evening dresses ——

Arvik (*jumps up*).— No, but that is the worst yet! That I haven't had the slightest inkling of!

Marna.— No, because only we knew about it, and aunt.

Arvik.— I knew well enough that I was being kept on the outside. But at that rate — (*to* MRS. ARVIK) — and you, how *can* you humor them to this extent?

Mrs. Arvik.— What am I to do about it? We have to help ourselves as best we can. We can't accommodate ourselves to all your caprices. We must be dressed like others of our class. And after our own taste. How can that offend you, seeing that it doesn't cost you anything?

Arvik.— Always this 'it does not cost me anything.' That's one insult more. But that isn't the point at all.

Mrs. Arvik.— What is the point, then?

Arvik (*looks at them*).— If you don't feel it,— I will not mention it, either.

Mrs. Arvik.— Just you mention it! If we are to have it out, you might as well speak plainly!

Marna.— But don't let mother be the sufferer! Because we girls are grown up, too.

Alberta.— Is that really so bad that mother lives her life a little with us? Because you certainly don't.

Arvik (*looks at her*).

Mrs. Arvik.— It isn't that I like it so much. I must have consideration for the children.

Arvik.— Was it out of consideration for the children? Oh, well, no, it's the same, anyhow!

All.— No, out with it!

Mrs. Arvik.— What is it, William?

Arvik (*after some struggle*).— Was it out of consideration for the

children — that you moved away from me?

Mrs. Arvik.— Moved away from you? I?

Arvik.— When Marna was married. Why, you don't even comprehend what I mean?

Mrs. Arvik.— Oh — that! That I moved my bed into Marna's room! By the side of the others! They begged me so, and I believed — (*throws up her hands in dismay*).

Helen.— Why, but father? Are you complaining about that, too?

Alberta.— Wasn't it done so that you could have it quiet mornings? And greater comfort! But father ——

Helen.— You want to sleep mornings, and mother must get up so early to get to town with the first steamer, on account of her business affairs.

Alberta.— Now you have your quiet. You have the whole floor to yourself, excepting the guest rooms.

Helen.— You have got mother's dressing room; the bathroom and sleeping room you have altogether to yourself.

Alberta.— Instead, mother must be content now to share all with us. It is ever so crowded over there, let me tell you. One is in the other's way. But it is awfully snug as we have it.

Marna.— Why, father, you always complained of mother snoring!

Arvik.— I didn't do any such thing! a single time, perhaps, when I couldn't sleep ——

Alberta, Helen, Marna.— Well, I declare!

Arvik (*heatedly*).— I don't want you to take everything so literally. What I may happen to say when I come down cross in the morning, because I had to get up so early ——

Alberta.— And we were so glad for your sake that we got mother to do it.

Helen.— You are really ungrateful to mother.

Marna.— That's what I think, too.

Mrs. Arvik.— This has hurt me, I acknowledge it. Why, after so long a marriage, William, I believe we understand each other no longer!

Arvik.— There may be something in that. (*He walks past her, looking at her, then past the others, looking also at them. Finally, walks out slowly to left.*)

Alberta.— You are going?

Helen.— But, father —— (Arvik *disappears from view.*)

Scene VIII

All (*are silent*).

All.— Was he hurt? (*Silence again.*)

Helen.— He looked so strangely at mother.

Alberta.— And at us, too.

Marna.— I hear him in the hall and in his rooms. Shall I go after him?

Mrs. Arvik.— No, indeed!

Helen.— We have acted wrong, perhaps?

Alberta.— It had to come once.

Marna.— And it came so naturally.

Alberta.— Yes, that's what I thought. It began with joking.

Helen.— But he must have understood it differently.

Marna.— No, now I have got to come down to you! (*Closes her window.*)

Alberta (*to* Helen).— Look at mother!

Mrs. Arvik (*stands as she stood when he left. Obviously in inner agitation*).

Helen (*toward her*).— Mother?

Mrs. Arvik (*without looking at her*).—Yes, my child.

Helen (*back to* Alberta).— No, it is no use, I know.

Marna (*joins them; has her hat on again*).— Something has happened here which we did not understand.

Helen.— Do you also believe so?

Alberta.— Father avoids scenes. So no one can know it for sure. But ——

Marna.— Listen! Let us go up to father!

Alberta, Helen.— Yes!

Marna.— And then nothing more will come of it.

Helen.— Shan't we ask his pardon?

Mrs. Arvik (*turns toward them*).— What?

Helen (*at the same moment screams*).— There he is really!

All (*turn to the right*).

Karl Tonning (*stands there, gloomy and resolute. He looks at* Alberta).

Helen (*rushes to* Alberta, *as if wanting to protect her*).

Marna (*does likewise*).

Mrs. Arvik (*all at once wideawake*).— Not one step farther! (*She has put her hand into her pocket.*)

Karl Tonning.— This time I shall not obey your orders. (*Advances.*)

Mrs. Arvik (*toward him*).—Then first you lay your revolver away. On the table!

Karl Tonning.— That order I shall not obey, either.

Mrs. Arvik (*furiously*).— How?

Alberta (*tears herself away and throws herself between them*).— Mother, let me! Go in, all of you! Let me ——

Mrs. Arvik.— How can you!

Alberta (*toward him*).— Give me your revolver!

Karl Tonning (*looks at her undecidedly*).

Alberta.— Give it me!

Karl Tonning (*puts his hand into his pocket. Looks at her. Lays the revolver into her hand*).

Alberta.— Now you all go in!

Mrs. Arvik (*walks up the stairs to the veranda. There she stops*).— May I really?

Alberta.— You see that you may.

Mrs. Arvik (*into the door*).

Marna, Helen (*afterwards leave by door to veranda on the right*).

Alberta.— You have been here a long time?

Karl Tonning.— Not long.

Alberta.— Why did you hide yourself? Why did you not come forth?

Karl Tonning.— Your father was here.

Alberta.— Are you afraid of my father?

Karl Tonning.— No, but he is against me.

Alberta.— All of us are.

Karl Tonning (*earnestly*).— But speak with me! Listen to me!

Alberta.— The way you act?

Karl Tonning.— It is all over now. Now that I see you!

Alberta (*after a pause*).— Here is your revolver!

Karl Tonning (*does not comprehend*).

Alberta.— Take it!

Karl Tonning (*takes it mechanically and puts it away, whilst gazing at her*).

Alberta.—You have struck into the wrong way. I won't be forced.

Karl Tonning.— I did not intend to force you. Not a second! No, no!

Alberta.— I believe I understand what you intended.

Karl Tonning (*bows his head*).

Alberta.— No scandal! Not of any kind! Therefore, you will leave the city now.

Karl Tonning (*looks up*).— That I cannot.

Alberta.— You can! Because after two years —— (*Pauses*)

Karl Tonning (*straining his attention to utmost, waits*).

Alberta.— If you can stand the test —— (*Pauses again*)

Karl Tonning (*as above*).

Alberta.— I shall come to you. No, stay quiet! I know you will stand the test. I know that your loyalty to my mother will pass over to me. And then I shall come to you.

Karl Tonning.— Two years! Two years!

Alberta.— Is that too much?

Karl Tonning.— Two days are too much! You do not understand me.

Alberta.— Then let me say one year.

Karl Tonning.— A whole year!

Alberta.— A whole year. Yes.

Karl Tonning.— May I write to you? And explain myself?

Alberta.— As often as you wish to.

Karl Tonning.— And will you answer me?

Alberta.— Every letter.

Karl Tonning.— Thanks! Then all will come right. And now I must go?

Alberta.— Now you must go.

Karl Tonning (*stands a while gazing at her, then hurries forward and grasps her hand, which he kisses respectfully, fervently*).

Alberta.— Good by!

Karl Tonning (*arises*).— Thanks! Good by! (*Exit.*)

Alberta (*remains, stupefied*).

Mrs. Arvik (*returns. She stops, looking at her, until* ALBERTA *rouses herself and throws herself into her arms*).

Marna and Helen (*join them*).

Alberta (*composes herself. As no one says anything she looks at them. Still agitated she asks*).— You say nothing? Did I act wrong?

Helen (*up to her*).— I was so touched. (*Turns away.*)

Marna (*up to her, likewise, but turns again and stands by herself*).

Alberta (*to her mother*).— You are so serious, mother? I thought of you all the time. I believed you would be glad of it.

Mrs. Arvik.— I am.

Alberta.— Yes, but what then?

Mrs. Arvik.— Oh,— such a peculiar light fell from it on my own marriage. This was so real and whole. It promises a devotion for life. (*She seats herself.*) (*A moment's silence*)

Scene IX

Hall (*from left; he sees at once that something has happened. Then to* Helen).— Is anything the matter?

Helen.— Yes, there is. But ——

Hall.— But ——

Helen.— Well, that which happened just now was good enough.

Alberta.— Karl Tonning was here.

Hall.— Anyhow, then! Was he the young man I saw walking, or rather, running down to meet the ship?

Alberta.— That was he.

Hall.— A fine-looking fellow. Well?

Helen.— I shall tell you about it later on.

Hall.— Something was the matter, you said?

Helen.— Yes, with father.

Hall.— With your father?

Helen.— We were settling some accounts, here. About ever so many things, and then he felt hurt and went up to his room. Don't you think we ought to go up to him and beg his pardon?

Hall.— He isn't there now.

Helen, Marna.— Oh, yes, he is.

Hall.— No. Why, I saw him way below by the steamboat pier. He was in a hurry, he, too. Because the steamer was just making fast. Where is he going to?

Helen.— Father?

Hall.— Yes. The man servant brought his baggage along. Two rather big trunks, and he was carrying a satchel himself.

Marna, Helen, Alberta.— Father?

Mrs. Arvik (*becoming attentive, arises*).— What's that about father?

Alberta.— Father has left.

Helen.— With the steamer.

Mrs. Arvik.— For the city, I suppose?

Helen.— No, he had several trunks along.

Hall.— Why, hasn't he said anything to you? Didn't he bid you good by?

All (*are silent*).

Hall.— He really did speak about traveling this morning.

Alberta, Helen, Marna.— Where to?

Hall.— I thought he was joking. He said to Australia.

The same.— To Australia?

Helen.— Father?

Marna.— Father, who never travels!

Alberta.— Why, but he asked me but now to go with him to London to-morrow. He had excellent company, he said.

Hall.— Did he say so? He didn't mention any one?

Alberta.— No.

Helen.— Dear, I hope you see that the whole thing is a joke. Father is not leaving. Father does not leave us. Father will not leave mother. Father would certainly first say good by. Can you imagine that he wouldn't? The whole thing is a joke! The whole thing! (*Bursts out crying.*)

Alberta.— Yes, *we* thought it was a joke.

Marna.— All of us.

Hall.— I warned you not to! (*Silence*)

Marna.— Well, then I shall go to the city and find him. (*Bursts out crying.*)

Mrs. Arvik.— No! If he really means to leave us we shall not stop him!

Marna.— Oh, yes, we should. There is scandal enough here already. I brought it with me. There mustn't be any more! (*Bursts out crying.*)

Hall.— That is right, Marna! Shall I keep you company?

Marna.— I must be alone. I shall manage it myself.

Hall.— Yes, but how?

Marna.— I shall first go to the ship that sails for London to-morrow. He said distinctly, to-morrow.

Alberta.— Yes.

Marna.— Because there is another boat that leaves to-night.

Hall.— Don't look for him there.

Marna.— How do you know? Are you sure about it?

Hall.— Absolutely.

Marna.— If he isn't yet aboard the one sailing to-morrow, or if he hasn't left his baggage on board, I shall make the round of the hotels, for to our apartments at aunt's he will not have gone.

Alberta, Helen.— No.

Marna.— The round of all the larger hotels. I shall return with him! Quite, quite certainly! (*Weeps.*)

Alberta.— But you can't get to the city now by the steamer.

Marna.— I shall ride my wheel to the station and take the train. The bicycles stand where they always stood? (*Points to the right.*)

Alberta.— Yes. Shan't I go with you?

Marna.— I would rather have a talk alone with father.

Hall.— Naturally.

Marna.— Good by, then, mother!

Mrs. Arvik.— I don't like this.

Marna.— No, no. But we children can do so much that you can't do. Dear mother! (*Kissing her.*) Good by, all.

Helen.— No, we shall follow you to the station.

All (*except* Mrs. Arvik).— Yes, let us! (*Out to left, following* Marna.)

Alberta (*in leaving*).— Good by, so long, mother!

Hall, Helen (*likewise*).— Good by!

Scene X

Mrs. Arvik (*remains behind in great agitation*).

Mary (*comes out on veranda to left*).— Mrs. Arvik! The groom says that Mr. Arvik forgot to take his shaving case with him. What are we to do?

Mrs. Arvik (*after a pause*).— No, he has a new one. He has taken that.

Mary.— Oh, yes, that's right. That which Missis gave him. Why he has taken that one along! (*Turns to go.*)

Mrs. Arvik.— O Mary! Please fetch my night clothes from the girls' room. And carry them over into Mr. Arvik's apartment.

Mary.— All right, ma'am. (*Exit.*)

Mrs. Arvik (*sits down and bursts into tears*).

(*Curtain*)

ACT III

The Same Scene

Mrs. Arvik (*in her morning gown. Sits by the table, reading in a thin booklet with extremely handsome binding*).

Man servant (*from above on left*).— Mrs. Arvik wishes to speak with me?

Mrs. Arvik.— As soon as you get time, let a couple of the girls help you to carry my bed over into Mr. Arvik's room.

Man servant.— We shall carry madam's bed over in there? (*Points to left.*)

Mrs. Arvik.— Yes.

Man servant.— Shall we move out Mr. Arvik's bed, then?

Mrs. Arvik.— Why should you? Why do you ask about that?

Man servant.— For nothing.

Mrs. Arvik.— You will please set my bed by the side of Mr. Arvik's.

Man servant.— Oh!

Mrs. Arvik.— And when you have done that, you can come in and get your pay.

Man servant.— I shall come and get ——

Mrs. Arvik.— Your pay. Yes. Before you go.

Man servant (*walks out slowly to left, in great astonishment*).

Mrs. Arvik (*arises and takes a few steps to and fro, then sits down again, begins reading afresh*).

Alberta, Helen (*both in morning gowns, after a while issue very quietly from the door to right. They stop a while, looking at their mother, who is drying her eyes. They do not look at each other*).

Alberta (*descending the stairs*).— Good morning, mother!

Mrs. Arvik (*hastens to conceal the booklet, then turns her head to her*).— Good morning, child! (ALBERTA *kisses her mother.*)

Helen (*comes also*).— Good morning! (*Also kisses her.*)

Alberta.— Why, but mother? You did not lie down at all last night?

Helen.— Your bed is untouched.

Mrs. Arvik.— I used father's bed, but sleep I did not.

Alberta.— What book is that you are reading in?

Helen.— And which you are concealing from us?

Mrs. Arvik (*after a pause*).— It is father's poems.

Alberta.— Songs, you mean?

Mrs. Arvik.— No, his songs lie on the piano. These are his poems.

Helen.— Has he written poems, too?

Mrs. Arvik.— Only for me.

Alberta.— When?

Mrs. Arvik.— During the first time when we were engaged. Yes, and later also.

Helen.— And those you have never shown us?

Mrs. Arvik.— They were written for nobody but me. (*Silence*)

Alberta (*discreetly*).— Have you heard anything from Marna?

Mrs. Arvik (*without looking at her*).— I have just been speaking with Marna over the telephone.

Both.— Well?

Mrs. Arvik.— She has *not* found father.

Both.— She has *not?* (*Silence*)

Alberta.— What a night Marna must have had of it!

Mrs. Arvik (*nods*).

Helen.— What does she think?

Mrs. Arvik.— That he sailed with the boat last night.

Alberta.— Hall was mistaken, then?

Mrs. Arvik (*doesn't answer*).

Alberta.— I wonder, in fact, where he had that information from. I have been thinking about that.

Helen.— But this with father? I can't understand it. I don't believe it, either.

Alberta.— This I will say, whether now it is a joke or earnest, it is shameful of father!

Mrs. Arvik (*arises*).— No! No, child! Not one bad word about father!

Both (*greatly astonished*).

Alberta.— But surely you don't think that this is right?

Mrs. Arvik.— I don't think so, either.

Alberta.— Yes, but, then?

Mrs. Arvik (*does not answer*).

Helen.— What, then, dear mother?

Mrs. Arvik.— It is not his fault.

Alberta.— Whose fault is it, then?

Mrs. Arvik (*struggling with herself*).— It is our fault, children!

Both.— Ours?

Mrs. Arvik.— Especially mine. Naturally. (*Bursts into tears, sits down.*)

Alberta.— No, but how can you say that?

Mrs. Arvik.— Really, only mine! Oh, I have longed for you, children. To get this said.

Helen.— But yesterday ——

Mrs. Arvik.— Don't speak about that! Between yesterday and to-day there is a whole night. More than that! Between yesterday and to-day there is a whole life. I have gone over it again. From the time we became acquainted till yesterday, when he went from us, looked at us, and went from us. (*Weeps.*)

Both.— But, mother! (*They kneel on each side of her.*)

Helen.— How unhappy you are, mother!

Mrs. Arvik.— Yes, children, I am unhappy, oh, so unhappy! He looked at us as if he wanted to take us to witness against our-

selves! Those eyes have not left me since. They are looking at me now.

Alberta.— Yes, speak with us, mother! That will relieve you.

Mrs. Arvik.— Yes, I believe so also.

Helen.— Won't you have something to eat?

Alberta.— Have you eaten anything?

Mrs. Arvik.— Yes, thank you. Mary has taken care of me. You must know, children, that from the time I laid myself down on his pillow and recognized him in its odor, yes, by all my senses — it was as if I melted into him. I thought his thoughts. I looked on our life as he looks at it. It came altogether of itself. It was so easy to, for it was just as I had looked on it at the beginning. He has kept that view, and I have deserted it.

Helen.— *You*, mother?

Mrs. Arvik.— I! I!

Alberta.— But you have grown faster than he, perhaps?

Mrs. Arvik.— That may very well be, but that does not explain it.

Alberta.— You two are so different.

Helen.— Yes, how did it come about that you two ——

Mrs. Arvik (*interrupting her*).— It was just the difference that attracted us!

Alberta.— How?

Helen.— Yes, how did you two become engaged?

Mrs. Arvik.— No, that I shan't tell. No, that is sacred. But I can relate the way it came about. I had returned from my boarding school in Switzerland, just at the time when he returned from Scotland and took charge of his estates. I was a wild, giddy girl who found it hard to control herself, but the first time I was together with him I had quite a new feeling. I felt a pleasant poise and peace.

Alberta.— How?

Mrs. Arvik.— He was so refined and calm. No, you cannot imagine him as he was then. One couldn't possibly help trying to agree with him. That is to say, be cosy and pleasant together with him, have a private chat with him, and then he became so interesting so arch and merry, in fact, so fascinating that it just wouldn't do to exist without him.

Helen.— And then he was so musical.

Mrs. Arvik.— So musical! He plays so rarely now, you know. That time, too, it was difficult to get him to, but he scarcely needed to touch the piano to make it sound differently; and me, too. I felt so well then, just as when he looked at me.

Helen.— Do explain, mother!

Mrs. Arvik.— I cannot. But I myself was so restless, so exaggerated, so impossible, and he so harmonious. I was happy whenever I was with him. Indeed, when merely thinking of him.

Alberta.— Then you certainly became mighty fond of him.

Mrs. Arvik (*eagerly*).— But do you know that I had strength enough to conceal from him?

Helen.— To conceal from him?

Mrs. Arvik.— You may believe me, it was trying.

Helen.— But why did you?

Alberta.— Oh, I believe I understand.

Mrs. Arvik.— I felt instinctively that I had to. Else he would not have come.

Helen.— You would have frightened him away? Or ——

Mrs. Arvik.— It was so easy to repel him. He was so sensitive.

Alberta (*joyfully*).— But he came.

Mrs. Arvik.— He came!

Helen.— Tell us!

Mrs. Arvik.— Not that! No, no! But I shall tell you of something else, something that made me happier still.

Helen.— Happier still?

Mrs. Arvik.— I believed I could not become any happier, and still — It came with a little poem he sent me, a short time after we had become engaged, with music to it.

Helen.— May we not hear it?

Alberta.— Oh, do let us!

Mrs. Arvik (*looking at them, while producing the booklet*).— But, then, you must let me be by myself, in a way.

Both (*softly*).— Yes.

Mrs. Arvik (*reads*):

Unsteady was I ever,
And courted well by all.
(*She pauses a little*)
Well had it ended never,
Till on you my eyes did fall.
(*Pauses again*)
My own mind you embodied,
In its own depths enshrined;
Whatever I had studied
To be, in you I find.

Alberta.— Oh, once more, mother!

Helen.— Yes!

Mrs. Arvik.— If I can.

Helen.— Oh do!

Mrs. Arvik (*reads it once more, and then conceals her face behind her pocket handkerchief*).

Alberta.— There, you can see, mother, it was altogether your mind that attracted him.

Mrs. Arvik.— I did not dream that I might be something to him, too. So you can imagine what I felt when I received this poem. I went to sleep with it, I awoke to it. It seemed to me as if I was something, too, even when I walked by his side.

Helen.— Are there no more you can read to us?

Mrs. Arvik.— Yes, there is one *I* think is the best one. It was written when Marna was born. He came in just when they laid the child to my breast.

Helen.— Do let us hear it.

Mrs. Arvik (*reads*):

In this life's greatest hour
I came,— who had despaired of you as dead,
And of our child, now for the first time fed.
You faintly smiled when you discovered me,
As if you said, for you I did all this.

Helen.— 'For you I did all this.'

Mrs. Arvik.— Your life with mine forever joined at rest
At first cry of the babe you suckled at your breast.
I stood on holy ground
In this life's greatest hour. (*Silence*)

Alberta.— Thanks, mother.

Mrs. Arvik.— But how does it come about, children, that two who have been so much to each other, who owe each other the greatest experiences in life, that they can go from each other?

Alberta.— You don't mean that, mother.

Helen.— Go from each other? You two?

Mrs. Arvik (*jumping up*).— That is what I have learned last night. I did not understand it before this, but *he* understood it, and *he* suffered under it.

Alberta.— But, dear me, supposing you do now and then quarrel about something ——

Helen.— Yesterday you said ——

Mrs. Arvik.— Yesterday! Yesterday! What didn't I say all

yesterday? When I did not understand anything as yet. Last night I heard from his pillow how I had forsaken him! Forsaken him, on your account, children, and on account of the household, and of those miserable business affairs. I pursued them more and more keenly — there is really something intoxicating in it! I have also practiced Marna in them, because she showed great talent. Ah, children, I have forsaken him — and that has not been a good thing for him. Forsaken him like some old house one moves out of and locks up, when one has gotten a new one. I forgot how much we had lived and played in it, but he remained behind with it. He could not forget; for he has a poet's nature.

Alberta.— Didn't he say anything, then?

Mrs. Arvik.— Oh, yes. But I did not understand it.

Helen.— You did not understand it?

Mrs. Arvik.— No. Because he did not speak plainly. He did not complain, he did not make any demands. He was too sensitive to do any such thing. He did not have the heart to do it, but he joked about it. He had so many queer ways and made so many allusions which I ought to have listened to, but you know how I am. For me there exists only one thing at a time,— that which I am just busy with and wish to have through.

Alberta (*smiling*).— Yes!

Mrs. Arvik.— Again and again he said many a thing which I did not heed — in fact he repeated them yesterday, too, but it is as if I had not heard them before last night! I believed he was joking, or at any rate, did not mean anything serious by it.

Helen.— Yes, that is his way.

Mrs. Arvik.— It has *gotten* to be his way, that I see now. He has been feeling lonely and forsaken, and then he hid himself behind his joking, and stuck his head out from behind it in curious conceits. We got accustomed to them; we hardly heard them. In that way he tried in vain to bridge over the gap between us, because he had, indeed, gotten on the opposite side.

Alberta.— On the opposite ——

Mrs. Arvik.— On the side opposite us. We did not listen to him; not yesterday, either, when he wanted to reconcile us with Marna's fate. Because he was right! We must not look at it so tragically. It was a mistake that is all over now. We exaggerate so, and lose our temper so easily. Heavens, children, how could we get along without him? Without him to have consideration for?

Helen.— You are certainly right, mother!

Mrs. Arvik.— We have been feeling so secure and so cheerful — only we just failed to remember to whom we owed that, and if we did things behind his back — it was because we were not afraid. But what do you think? He was aware of it. He knew about it, only he did not wish to disturb us, and it amused him to let us believe that he didn't know about it. I am quite sure!

Alberta (*jumps up*).— What's that you are saying?

Mrs. Arvik.— Last night I went over our whole conversation of yesterday. It was quite unmistakable. It may be that he did not know about the gowns at aunt's, our hats and cloaks, maybe not, but the other things — all! He knows more than we told him. Yes, indeed! I see his face so clearly before me.

Helen (*jumps up*).— Now you say it ——

Mrs. Arvik.— He thought it a capital joke that we believed he didn't know about anything.

Alberta.— That would be just like him!

Mrs. Arvik (*also arises*).— No doubt about it! And so I say, is there one in a thousand who would do such a thing? Who is that way? How sweet and good of him — with all his curious talk — that he let us believe that he knew of nothing! That he let us enjoy to the full what we did?

Alberta.— If that is true ——

Mrs. Arvik.— True? Well, I should say.

Alberta.— Then we have behaved to him like so many wretches.

Mrs. Arvik.— Here we are talking about having consideration — no, that is to be considerate, that is!

Helen (*very shamefacedly*).— Why haven't I said all to father!

Mrs. Arvik.— And how about me? And how about me?

Alberta.— And never once did he answer harshly. Never anything that hurt, although he knew ——

Mrs. Arvik.— It is my fault, altogether!

Helen.— Dear me, mother, why you did it to afford us some pleasure?

Alberta.— We persuaded you to do it.

Mrs. Arvik.— I am thinking of more than that!

Helen.— Of more?

Mrs. Arvik.— Of my business affairs! How much I owe to him there! His wise counsels, his warnings. Even when he was not by my side, I could imagine what he would say. (*Moved.*) And for that I have never thanked him!

Alberta.— No, that wasn't right, mother.

Mrs. Arvik.— But how if I got so accustomed to it that I did not think about it any longer?

Helen.— All the same ——

Mrs. Arvik.— Ah, there is something still worse!

Alberta.— Worse yet?

Mrs. Arvik.— I can hardly say it!

Helen (*frightened*).— What can that be?

Mrs. Arvik.—These poems, these beautiful poems — they might have been in school readers — I haven't, I haven't ——

Both.— What, mother?

Mrs. Arvik.— I haven't read them — these — fifteen years! Ah, longer! (*Weeps.*)

Helen.— That is dreadful of you, mother. (*Cries.*)

Alberta.— Yes, that I must say, too, in that you haven't acted right toward father, mother! No, certainly you haven't. (*Sobs.*)

Mrs. Arvik.— Oh, I have had such a dreadful night! Don't say any more to me. (*Sobs.*)

Helen.— It is no wonder — that he leaves us! (*Sobs.*)

Alberta.— In fact, it's strange — that he hasn't done so before this!

Mrs. Arvik.— So i — i — impossible as I am!

Helen.— Oh, we are no less so. (*All cry.*)

Scene III

Hall (*enters quickly from the right*).

Hall.— Yes, you have good cause for crying!

Alberta.— Well, aren't we?

Hall.— Because I am so shocked that I can't find words.

Helen.— You?

Hall.— I? More than any one of you, I should think. He really left last night.

Helen (*crying*).— We don't wonder the least bit.

Alberta.— Not at all.

Hall.— What's that? But you don't know, then? He did not leave alone.

Alberta.— No, why should he?

Hall.— He left with some one he is running after.

Helen (*turns at him*).— Father? Father run after anybody?

Alberta (*turns at him*).— Father?

Hall.— Just wait a moment! Here I have a telegram. He

boarded the steamer that left for England last night, because he mistook the boat, so he remained on it! And undoubtedly left on it, last night!

Helen.— Is there anything wrong in that?

Hall.— The telegram is from Alvilde, you hear.

Alberta.— Has Alvilde left? For England — Alvilde?

Hall.— I had forgotten to tell you. I am so overcome. She received money from him yesterday to travel with.

Helen.— He had promised her that long ago.

Hall.— Yes. To make it short, he wanted to go along with her, for that reason she got it! So she hurried off yesterday and left secretly. She did not want to leave with him! Do you comprehend? But then he managed to go along, all the same!

Helen.— I can't see that there is anything wrong in that.

Alberta.— Neither can I.

Mrs. Arvik (*angrily*).— What sort of insinuations are you trying to foist on us?

Hall.— She absolutely refused to travel in his company. For that there certainly must be a reason.

Helen.— The reason is that she wanted to travel by herself. What other?

Alberta.— I would have done the same thing if I liked flirting as much as she does.

Hall.— How?

Helen.— And how ungrateful of Alvilde! Just think, to accept money to travel with from him, and then refuse to let him go along!

Mrs. Arvik.—That I must say, I do think this is acting *very* rangely on the part of Alvilde. There must be something at the ottom of this.

th *Alberta.*— There is somebody else she wanted to travel with, course.

Helen.— Now you say it ——

Alberta.— And whatever may be the reason that she sneaks away without saying good by to any one of us?

Helen.— Without so much as saying a word?

Hall.— It *was* for that reason! Can't you comprehend? So at *he* shouldn't be along.

t *Mrs. Arvik.*— That certainly wasn't nice of Alvilde.

my *Helen.*— Alvilde has been so queer of late. So reticent, so th etive.

H *Mrs. Arvik* (*leaves the group and enters the house, without the*

others noticing it in their eagerness).

Alberta.— Alvilde is always so scheming. She isn't straightforward.

Hall.— Well, I certainly did not expect that this was to be changed into an attack on my daughter, and to think that you can join in that, Helen!

Helen.— Neither did we expect you to come and make an attack on father.

Hall.— But if I do now ——

Helen (*without letting herself be interrupted*).— Here we were speaking well about father. How little we had understood him, and how considerate and kind he had been, all the same, although we didn't do anything in return. We lived for ourselves, we had good times behind his back, and let him be by himself, and feel himself deserted by us. We took mother from him, and denied him that confidence in trifles which is the pleasantest of all things, and poor mother ——

Alberta.— But where is mother gone to?

Helen (*to* HALL).— There you can see! You have chased her away! She couldn't stand you!

Alberta.— Of course she has gone into the house. *Goes in herself.*)

Hall.— Now, you are really unjust, Helen. I who did not wish anything more dearly than that we all should look to it that things shouldn't go wrong here ——

Helen.— How wrong?

Hall.— There is Marna!

Marna (*from the right*).

Helen (*runs up to her, they embrace each other, both weep*)

Marna.— Is mother in there? (*Points to the left.*)

Helen.— Yes. She did not sleep a wink last night.

Marna.— No. I can imagine so.

Helen.— And what a night you must have had!

Marna.— I should not like to have missed it, for in it my own sorrow became so small.

Hall.— I can understand that.

Marna.— Helen, we did not understand father. We did not behave right to father.

Helen.— You also say that? We haven't spoken about anything else the whole morning.

Marna.— Together with mother?

Helen.— Yes, with mother.

Marna.— I must go in to her! (*Takes a step, then turns around.*) The point now is to see to it that people don't get still more to gossip about. There is enough here, as it is. By all means no scandal! (*Goes in.*)

Scene V

Hall.— There you can hear, Helen!

Helen.— What?

Hall.— Marna says the same as I.

Helen.— As you? Marna!

Hall.— The point is to prevent any scandal.

Helen.— You believe, do you, that Marna means by scandal such a thing as you do?

Hall.— What else?

Helen.— She is as far from that as from the North Pole. Your insinuations have hurt us deeply. Father, who is the noblest, the most considerate of all men. About him you say — (*comes closer to him*). Is it because I am about to enter the sacrament of marriage that you dare treat me thus?

Hall.— But Helen ——

Helen.— For, in that case, I believe I don't want to enter into it. (*Bursts into tears and runs out to right.*)

Hall (*remains a while, quite overcome, then he says*).— I suppose I shall experience some surprises ——

Scene VI

Marna, Alberta (*from the house on the left, already when the door is being opened, one hears*):

Marna.— We must say that an English friend of his took him along to England.

Alberta.— And supposing he travels farther?

Marna.— That the same friend took him on a longer journey.

Alberta.— Nobody is going to believe that. No one who knows father.

Marna.— But we *must* hush it up.

Alberta.— It's no use. Mother can't dissemble. (*To* Hall.) Where is Helen?

Hall.— Helen? Why, Helen went in. (*Points to the right.*)

Marna.— Is there something wrong? *Here*, too?
Hall.— No, by no means! No, indeed!
Alberta (*to* HALL).— Listen, mother wishes to be alone.
Hall.— Naturally.
Alberta.— But not in there.
Hall.— Why not in there?
Marna.— She can't stand seeing and hearing the steamers.
Hall.— Poor mother!
Marna.— She wants to be here. So we ought to go.
Alberta.— Come, then! (*About to go in to right.*)
Marna.— No, let us go upstairs, to our old rooms, from there we have such a fine view of the bay. (*Exit, first herself to right, the others follow.*)

SCENE VII

Mrs. Arvik (*slowly from left, descends, stands still, then sits down*). — If he had not done this, I would certainly never have become aware of it. Isn't it as if I have been two persons? One that remained behind with the poems from our youth, and one who ran away from them to attend to all manner of things? She who remained behind with the poems,— now she is sitting here and sorrows. William! William! if you knew how I sorrow you would not leave me! I don't understand how you could! I don't believe it, either. The poems? Where did I put them? That's right, I hid them when I heard some one coming. Why did I do that? (*Rises and goes in to fetch them.*) (*Scarcely is she inside but* MARNA *comes flying from the right over to the left side, running as fast as she can, and scarcely has she disappeared, but in comes* ALBERTA *likewise. And scarcely has she disappeared, but in comes* HELEN *likewise, and* HALL *after her.*)

Mrs. Arvik (*returns with the booklet in her hand. She opens it, looks about, dries her eyes, and begins to sing softly to herself*): 'Unsteady was I ever.' (*She does not succeed at first, on account of her agitation, but she begins over again. Just as she has gotten under way and has sung a few lines,* MARNA *comes in with her father, and the others after them. They come to a halt in the background. Then, one after the other they steal away on tiptoe to the right and disappear.* ARVIK *alone remains behind.*)

SCENE VIII

Arvik.— So you are sitting here and singing, are you?

Mrs. Arvik (*is greatly startled, then struggles between laughter and tears; finally bursts out, hiding her booklet*).— What sort of way is that to come! (*Rises.*)

Arvik (*smiling*).— Well, how am I to come?

Mrs. Arvik.— You ought not to leave, and then you would not need to come!

Arvik.— That's so.

Mrs. Arvik (*with increasing anger*).— You stand there looking amused! As if you hadn't done anything! Don't you know, yourself? Don't you know that Marna last night made the round of all the hotels to find you and get you home again? Can you imagine what a night she had of it! and in what anguish and despair we others have been living in?

Arvik.— I am so sorry, but you forget ——

Mrs. Arvik (*passionately*).— I forget nothing! I know well what you are going to say. That it is our fault. It is, but is that noble to repay wrong with wrong? Is that like you? We certainly haven't done anything bad. We never entertained a single harsh thought about you, we never wanted to insult or disgrace you, that you might on our account have a single anxious night. All was done with the best of intentions.

Arvik.— I am sure.

Mrs. Arvik (*without letting herself be interrupted*).— In order to spare you, in order to avoid scenes and all that we knew was unpleasant to you, so that, however much it is our fault — this we didn't deserve of you.

Arvik.— No, indeed, but ——

Mrs. Arvik.— There are no buts here at all! It is unjustifiable what you have done to us. We who love you and are so dependent on you. You ought to be able to imagine how this house would look without you. We did not know any longer which way to turn. We were running about, the one crying, the other crying, just as if we were on the wild waste sea, helpless and before a storm, because a storm was brewing here. We heard already from the servants what people were going to say. A shame, oh, such a shame that such an old man should leave house and wife and family — such a tempest none of us could have weathered! We were too much used to better things.

Arvik.— I know you, of course. All that has pained you must out, but you forget ——

Mrs. Arvik.— It is you who forget! You forget that all of your

children are grown up! They say when old married people separate, 'It is a good thing that the children are grown up.' I say, though, it is twenty times worse. Children don't know what is happening; or they understand but half, but the grown up children, they weep with the one who remains behind, they feel ashamed, as if it had happened to each of them, and when, in addition, they love both their father and their mother, they fall into such an agony of despair that among them they sorrow as no one single person could.

Arvik.— But dear, dear, come to yourself! Why, you forget —

Mrs. Arvik.— What do I forget? Why don't you tell me?

Arvik.— That I am here. That I haven't left at all.

Mrs. Arvik (*stops short and collects herself*).—You are here! You haven't left at all! You are here! (*Laughing and crying at the same time.*) Why, it's true! You did not leave us! You are here! Where have I got my senses? And how everlastingly patient you are with me, how sweet and good! You dear one, you ever loved one! (*She embraces him and clings to him, kissing him between her sentences*).— How naughty I have now again been to you, and I'm so glad that I don't know what to do with myself! But how did it happen? Tell me! (*Kisses him.*)

Arvik.— I went ashore again. I couldn't.

Mrs. Arvik.— You couldn't. If I didn't think all along — 'I shall stake my life on it that he can't'! — and that, though you have a wife so impossible as me.

Arvik (*looking into her eyes*).— It was just this impossible you, you see!

Mrs. Arvik.— Thanks! Oh, a thousand million thanks!

Arvik.— It couldn't well be any less.

Mrs. Arvik.— Yes, it is frightful how exaggerated I am, and the children have that from me.

Arvik.— Maybe they would have been content with a few millions less, for they are so much more perfect than we — the children.

Mrs. Arvik.— You rogue! (*At this moment the man servant and a couple of servant girls enter from the right, each carrying some part of a large, elegant iron bedstead, with bed clothes. They proceed toward the left. Behind the bed come* MARNA *and* ALBERTA, *arm in arm; behind them,* HELEN *and* HALL, *arm in arm.*)

Arvik (*laughing, embraces his wife, offers her his arm, they follow as a third couple.*)

(*Curtain*)

BÖRNSTJERNE BJÖRNSON'S LAST DRAMA, "WHEN THE NEW WINE BLOOMS"

By Lee M. Hollander

IT is only a generation ago since the dust began to fly in the vigorous home-cleaning campaign started in Scandinavia by 'A Doll's House' (1879), and Björnson's 'A Glove' (1883). The men and women, then in their teens and twenties, brought up in those tumultuous and intoxicating times when, to their parents, at least, the very bottom threatened to drop out of the social fabric, are now grown to mature middle age, and have themselves borne and reared a new generation. No wonder that, in the majority of instances, this new generation, in its turn, was reared in the spirit of those ideals for the recognition of which they had suffered and struggled. A less prejudice-ridden, more healthy and outspoken race has assuredly never trodden this earth. Not even young America enjoys, and regardlessly takes, the liberties that nowadays are unhesitatingly granted to the young men and women of Scandinavia, especially of Norway. Here as there, youth carries the day and jauntily disposes of the ripe wisdom of the quinquagenarian and sexagenarian as old foggyism. Only recently women in Norway (and semi-Scandinavian Finland) have received the electoral franchise, with hardly a struggle,— forsooth, the pendulum could scarcely have swung more completely away from the reactionary tendencies that prevailed in the North a generation ago, and drove a Björnson, a Brandes, an Ibsen into exile.

Now it is the one most broadly effective in the battle for emancipation, Björnstjerne Björnson, who, with his recent play has called a halt: now that the weight of public opinion threatens to lurch to the other extreme, and the tide of excessive individualism, involving even the lowest strata of society, is about to sweep away the last vestiges of family solidarity as a basis for ethical conduct, when the virtues of reverence, duty, and filial love are becoming old fashioned with a vengeance. Björnson is not laboring under the illusion that he, or any man, could stem that tide. He has preferred

to direct it, to part the flood, if possible, so as to shear it of its excessive and dangerous volume. He has chosen as vehicle of his message the 'good-natured' comedy. Never was the splendid Björnsonian faculty of orientating himself and his world-wide audience on the troubled seas of warring tendencies more gloriously evidenced. And while piloting us, helm in hand, into safer waters, he 'wins new lands' and makes sheer poetry of it all. As the poet of the deeper impulses of our times, with eyes boldly envisaging the future, he is still easily *facile princeps*.

'When the New Wine Blooms' is a marvellous thing for an old man to have written, on his sick bed withal, and tortured by the inexorable disease from which he is now seeking a last relief in Paris. The same grand bland optimism pervades its sunny scenes which animated him in the spring of his long career, the same glad warm hope for the human race — that, after all, man is kindly and brave and that the young generation promises to carry the world forward yet one more step! The very title, absit omen, significantly recalls the farewell words and 'Epilogue' of Ibsen, whose 'When We Dead Awaken' is essentially a sorrowing over a life irretrievably misspent in abnegation. Above all, it is a sounding blow against a Tolstoi's weary and half Oriental recoil from essaying the untrodden paths which modern conditions have forced us to tread, for ill or for good, and a helpful push on the way, to help lift us out of the first ruts and into the right lanes. To us in the West it is a timely rectification of the compass.

Björnson has never for a moment hesitated to call in art as an ally of life. As pointed out above, the purpose of this play is to balance off anew the respective rights of the older and the younger generation; and, more especially, perhaps, though also a question of the two generations, the rights of a man to his family, as against the claims of his family on him. With the world-old problem of old and young he had grappled but recently again, in his drama 'Daglannet' (1903), with all the great force and originality we have learned to expect from Björnson, yet unconvincingly. A far more vital connection links it to his fine comedy, 'Geography and Love.' As we shall see, his new play is the problem of 'Geography and Love' reversed.

. . . . . .

The economically, socially, and religiously 'neutral' background is formed by the graceful and easy hospitality of a well to do family,

in their spacious home somewhere, we infer, along the shores of the island-dotted Kristiania-fjord, within easy reach of the capital. It is midsummer, all is flowers, warmth, and sunshine. The family live out of doors chiefly, on the veranda and the court between the two wings of the mansion, with a vista of the garden and the outside world beyond. This space is happily chosen as a sort of natural stage. With its doors and its windows opened ever and anon with great comic effect, it might be taken as symbolic, on the whole, of the large family home, where everybody hears everybody else, and secrets become family property, 'Der er lydt,' as the Norwegian would say.

It is a household of the modern style, the young folks have the upper hand. Within its lee the three marriageable daughters and a bevy of girl friends flit to and fro like an elfin band, a most modern one, to be sure. They are distressingly knowing, and have very positive and well-grounded opinions on marriage, religion, and other little matters,— in fact, know perfectly what's what.

Dean Hall, who is visiting his sister-in-law, Fru Arvik ('a handsome man, forty-five to fifty years . . . nothing specially priestly about him; looks rather like a sportsman') is caught and brought to bay by the girls and mercilessly quizzed on his views on marriage, as voiced in his last sermon; and in however modern a spirit he interprets and defends the Pauline injunction to wives 'submit yourself unto your husbands as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife . . .' he and his theology are certainly on the defensive, and get the worst of the argument.

This amusing preamble serves notice, as it were, that as a sign of the times religion is 'out of the saga.' It may be remarked in passing, that in this play not even moral scruples —this is right and this is wrong — in the slightest measure help to guide and decide the conduct of a person in a given case, but only feeling, habit. And we shall not far wrong Björnson in asserting these to be his ultimate guiding principles at the present time. Religion no longer has even the interest of discussion for the poet of '*Pastor Sang*.'

The center of this most modern household is Fru Arvik. She is a 'new woman.' With gentle irony the poet speaks of her dabbling in business (harmlessly), speculating in shares; and we have not the slightest doubt of her being an active member of all sorts of women's clubs for all sorts of things. She takes herself very seriously. She must hustle and get up early every morning, in order to catch the first boat to town, 'to attend to business,' whilst her less strenuous

husband prefers to stay longer abed, thus with comic eagerness reversing what, up to the present, we have thought to be the normal relation of husband and wife as breadwinner and householder. And yet we are made to feel by the subtlest touches what she is about to forget, namely, that it is her devoted husband to whom she owes whatever ability and stability she possesses.

But let it not be supposed that she is hard and unwomanly, if impetuous and headstrong. Far from it! Björnson may be relied upon to do her case full justice. Sheh as all the rich, loving nature which forms the strongest bulwark of the family — the rest are but frills that mar the noble architecture of her soul. She is an excellent mother, the comrade of her children — to be sure to the utter neglect of her husband, and to altogether unreasonable lengths. She is 'so exaggerated, so impossible,' as she recognizes herself. She has been thoughtless enough to move from her husband's and to her daughter's suite of rooms, leaving him alone to himself in one wing.

'The mother always agrees with the children. And the children take their mother's side. . . . But she doesn't stop there. She can't do anything by halves. She thinks and feels as the children think and feel. She lives entirely with them. . . . And all these girl friends! And all these love affairs and squabbles. And all that gossiping! And then the half engagements and full engagement and fallings out.. . . . I (Arvik is speaking) get completely mixed up. But she? Why, she swims in it as the fish in the sea.'

Arvik, the husband, is one of those gentle, poetic, and chiefly passive natures — coupled, in this instance, with a saving amount of irony and masculinity — Björnson has so frequently drawn with the deepest sympathy, as foil to a more violent temperament with strong instincts and volition — such as himself.

His desire is to live and work quietly on his estate and with his books. The everlasting Donnybrook fair in his house annoys him; his wife simply does not satisfy him; the growing estrangement from his family is increasingly preying on his sensitive mind. Their likes are no longer his. He knows all about the little secrets, innocent enough, his wife and his daughters have together; but, pained though he is at ever being kept an outsider, he winks at it. He is too forbearing and considerate to upbraid, too manly to complain. He only hides his real mind farther and farther away behind veiled hints and allusions, and gets them to laugh at his quaint conceits. It is only natural that it does not occur to them at all that he could have any grievance. Partly through his own fault, then, he is com

ing to be regarded as a harmless 'fixture,' a negligible quantity, except as money-getter.

At the same time Arvik is too young for this mild, toothless resignation, and he refuses to be thrown *ad actas*, to the 'old iron.' Now and then his blood boils, and he mutters about going to — Australia, which only produces fresh laughter, as being a new little joke of his; for, indeed, he has grown to be a great stay at home.

There is, then, enough powder accumulating around the Arvik premises, and the flirtatious atmosphere keeps it dry; only the proverbial spark is needed to break up the family into its component elements. Nothing, we make free to say, nothing in all dramatic literature is more admirably convincing than the way Björnson motivates the inevitable explosion. Arvik's grievance, it is clear, must be transformed in kind, must, from a chronic and latent stage, pass into an acute and open one. It is done by simply heightening, by suggestion, the demands Arvik yet makes on life—and on his wife.

Dean Hall, who is a widower, and himself the father of a marriageable daughter (Alvilde), is desperately in love with Arvik's youngest daughter, a girl of sweet sixteen (Helene). He is sure of her affections, darsn't declare himself, though before, 'in the spirit of St. Paul,' he obtained her father's permission. In a roguish scene, itself as pure and ethereally plastic as cherry blossoms against a dark blue sky, yet teeming with superb comic possibilities, he is made to discover himself, half against his will; and forthwith proceeds to vindicate his somewhat hazardous intention by an ardent dithyramb on girlish youth and charm, in which this impressionable divine betrays a surprising acquaintance with the æsthetic vocabulary of Kierkegaard: 'When the new wine blooms the old wine ferments,' as the Norwegian adage has it. He does not need to push his claims. Subtly suggested, the thought arises in Arvik's mind that he is not too old, either, to have erotic adventures of his own. He confesses that he also is in love with one of the sweet creatures. Obligations? Ties? 'Am *I* married, do you think,' he exclaims savagely.

Of course, Hall is too poor an observer — as how can a priest and one in love into the bargain, but be — is too poor an observer to attach any importance to this ominous outburst. He laughs off Arvik's notion. For that matter, neither does the object of his affection, Alvilde (Hall's daughter) take him seriously, though her womanly instinct warns her to avoid playing with her uncle. Both for avoiding her father's marriage with her playmate, and to escape Arvik's attentions, she is about to leave for England.

Meanwhile Fru Arvik has returned from the city, accompanied by her second daughter, Alberta, who is dogged by an insistent and desperate suitor whom Fru Arvik — behold she too! — seems to care for more than does her daughter. He is threatening to shoot up the place, much to peaceful Arvik's disgust and astonishment. That isn't anything, however, to frighten Mrs. Arvik. She is a revolver expert herself, and some breezy Wild West scene seems imminent, when Alberta courageously faces her pursuer and puts him off with one year's probation.

All of a sudden the trunks and valises of Marna, the oldest, recently married daughter, and her mother's special pride, appear on the scene — unexpectedly for all but Arvik, who has had the inside news, this time for the nonce, Marna's husband having intimated in a letter to him that the barometer has been standing 'at storm.' In short, she is about to return home for good.

The general consternation ensuing turns to indignation when Arvik hints that it is she who is at fault. 'After but five months' marriage!' 'She is a splendid woman' . . . 'All who know her like her.' 'Marna has character. A noble, fine character . . such a gifted and tactful woman as Marna, and so good and winning, to say that she was not fit to be a wife!' are some of the protests raining over his head.

The family, quite unnoticeably, resolves itself into a discussion meeting on marriage problems, a discussion *sans gene*, yet handled with the utmost delicacy.

Arvik suddenly feels called upon to reassert himself. He had seen it coming. Oh, yes, Marna has many fine qualities—he is most ready to grant all that; but, he claims, it is precisely all these outside interests, 'business activities,' and what not, that divert a woman's thoughts from home and husband. She becomes, if of Marna's type, the pathologically insensible woman of to-day, incapable of the passion man continues to crave. From these considerations (and his own case) he takes up the cudgels *for* the young husband, *against* his own child. Knowing Björnson's irrepressible didactic turn, we harbor but little doubt that this scene contains the central and originating thought of the drama, as applied both to the candidate for the silver wedding and the newly wedded.

Marna appears presently, elegantly gowned, sobbing and woebegone, with the last number of the 'Shipping Gazette' under her arm. To the immense indignation of the family, Arvik refuses to regard her homecoming as very tragical. Words are bandied, there are the

usual bickerings, he vents his grievances, great and small — a golden humor lights up this precious scene — until finally, overcome by a cumulative sense of his many wrongs, he turns on them, lets his eyes rest long upon his wife, and departs for England, as we learn. Alvilde, we remember, is to leave that same night, also bound for England.

No sooner is he gone than a tragic shadow seems to fall on those remaining. There is no longer any one 'to have consideration for.' 'We have felt so secure and happy, all along, we had clean forgotten to whom we owed that.' Their natural protector is there no longer, they feel their weakness, though hating to confess it. Overwhelmed by sweet memories that crowd upon her out of the past, and dismayed at the wholly unexpected turn of events, Fru Arvik is the first one to repent. A sleepless night on Arvik's pillow has revealed to her his point of view. And comparing notes with her, the daughters also are led to a deeper consciousness of what they have lost in him. When Hall, too late, informs them of what Arvik's probable plans are, they unanimously and vehemently repudiate his fears and his insinuations of an understanding with Alvilde.

Meanwhile, unavailing search has been made for him, and things look black enough, when Arvik smilingly reappears. He had boarded the ship, but had gone ashore again. He 'just couldn't.'

Final reconciliation. The bridal bed of the Arviks, 'a large elegant iron bedstead,' is borne back in triumphal procession, with the reunited family following. The victory is Arvik's—not so much through the force of his character, as by the logic of the situation. The family idea is vindicated. It is to be perpetuated in its mighty consolidating influence on the young generation. The old generation, we understand, is to live a life of their *own* and for themselves during the remainder of their days without prejudice to, yet also independent of, the younger folk. Through a last 'fermentation' of love they will then safely enter into the harboring clarity of old age.

. . . . . .

With no more information about the new play than that furnished above, the attentive reader of 'Geography and Love' (1885), will now see the justice of the assertion that here we have the same problem exactly reversed. The poet himself is unquestionably aware of it; he has familiarized himself with the earlier work, as is evident from the reappearance of even subsidiary motives, down

to details of repartee. We shall not point these out here, but content ourselves with recalling a few traits that are too essential to be coincidences.

In 'Geography and Love' it is the husband, Tygesen, the finely gifted professor of geography, who is actively at fault. He has become absorbed in his science to the exclusion of all else. His maps and charts and notes are invading the whole house and crowding out his wife. In his heart also. If the Arvik daughters do not feel their father's necessity, in this case, it is the father who selfishly sends away his daughter to a boarding school to get her out of the way. It is he who tyrannizes over the household, having been spoiled by excessive indulgence on the part of its female members; until finally, egged on by a friend of hers, and tempted by a tacit admirer, the wife rebels, and departs 'on a journey.' A reconciliation is then brought about by Tygesen being softened by reminiscences from his wooing days, and his wife returning for imponderable reasons, much in the same way as Arvik.

In both cases, then, there is a catastrophe narrowly averted in a marriage of long standing. But, *tempora mutantur*, if in the former case it was the now completely old-fashioned, sovereign type of husband who is neglecting his wife, because *he* is unduly wrapped up in his profession, and *she* has allowed him to become an egotist, here we have the wife who has grown oblivious of her conjugal duties by becoming a 'new woman' and all its corollaries; and — an exaggeration of the beautiful character of Margrete (*'Paa Storhove'*) and Fru Dag (*Daglannet*), who are on terms of a charming camaraderie with their children — by altogether espousing the cause of the younger generation and deserting her own.

Nothing is more astonishing in Björnson's genius than his seemingly infinite capacity and eagerness for development. Björnson and standing still are mutually exclusive terms. Comparing, more particularly, this his latest work with the earlier comedy, a careful examination reveals nothing so clearly as his progress in the power of revealing psychological processes of the most intimate order. Age has not in the slightest measure impaired his fertility in the invention of motifs; nor, in employing them, that delicate insight into the tiniest root fibers of human actions, great and small, which is the true poet's inalienable prerogative. Again and again one marvels at the incomparably fine and close woof of the very texture of the action. In the smaller dramatic units, reply dovetails reply with the same 'Björnsonian' ingenuity and éclat; and the style is as ever in the days

of 'A Glove' and of 'Leonarda,' 'as if charged with gunpowder,' but now also with many new notes of resonance and tenderness.

Lack of plausibility has at times been the weak spot in Björnson's works. Whether or no the method adopted, of bringing back to her conjugal obligations a woman of just Fru Arvik's type, by the mere recollection of honeymoon felicity, is entirely credible I prefer to leave undebated. A more cynically scrupulous dramatist like Ibsen, e.g., would, you may be sure, have shunned this rather trite device. But that a dramatist of such resourcefulness and intellectuality as Björnson has both lifted these scenes high above the pitfalls of sentimentality, and hedged them about with the sharp thorns of his humor goes without saying.

A BALLAD OF TWO KNIGHTS

By Sara Teasdale

Two kinghts rode forth at early dawn
A-seeking maids to wed.
Said one, "My lady must be fair,
With gold hair on her head."

Then spake the other knight-at-arms:
"I care not for her face,
But she I love must be a dove
For purity and grace."

And each knight blew upon his horn,
And went his separate way,
And each knight found a lady love
Before the fall of day.

But she was brown who should have had
The shining golden hair —
I ween the knights forgot their words,
Or else they ceased to care;

For he who wanted purity
Brought home a wanton wild;
And when each saw the other knight,
I ween that each knight smiled.

FRAY LUIS DE LEON OF THE UNIVERSITY OF SALAMANCA, 1529-1591, TO HIS PUPIL, THE POET, JUAN DE GRIAL

From the Spanish, by Thomas Walsh

Now is earth's loveliness withdrawn
  Unto her bosom; now the heavens are stoled
In vesture of the faded lawn;
  And from the branches' lifeless hold
  Leaf after leaf unto the ground is doled.

Now Phoebus turns on sunlit tread
  Along Ægean shores; the coursing day
Runs swifter; noontide is bespread
  With herding of the fleeces gray
  Of Eoleus upon his blustery way.

By dim horizons go the cranes
  Of Ibycus migrating with their cry
Portentous; and the bullock strains
  Against the yoke his shoulders high,
  Turning the patient furrows to the sky.

To noble studies would the hours,
  Grial, convene us; and the voice of Fame
Call upward to her sacred towers
  And to her summit bid us aim
Where never yet the breath of passion came.

To her sure guidance bolder strides
  The foot upon the mountain; so it gains
That utmost peak whence purest glides
  The fountain free as yet of stains;—
  Drink there thy fill, so thirst no more remains.

Then naught to thee is golden lure
That snares mankind upon a fevered quest
For that which can no more endure
Than gossamer the zephyr's breast
Is wafting light and fickle without rest.

Apollo smiles on thee,— Then write;
Be peer with olden poets; take thy stand
Above our newer bards in might;
But oh, dear friend, not hand in hand
May'st hope to clasp me on that songful strand!

For I, whom whirlwinds have assailed,
And treachery from brave adventuring
Down to the very grime hath haled,
Find broken — I a wounded thing!
My lyre belovèd and my soaring wing!

mg627@nyu.edu